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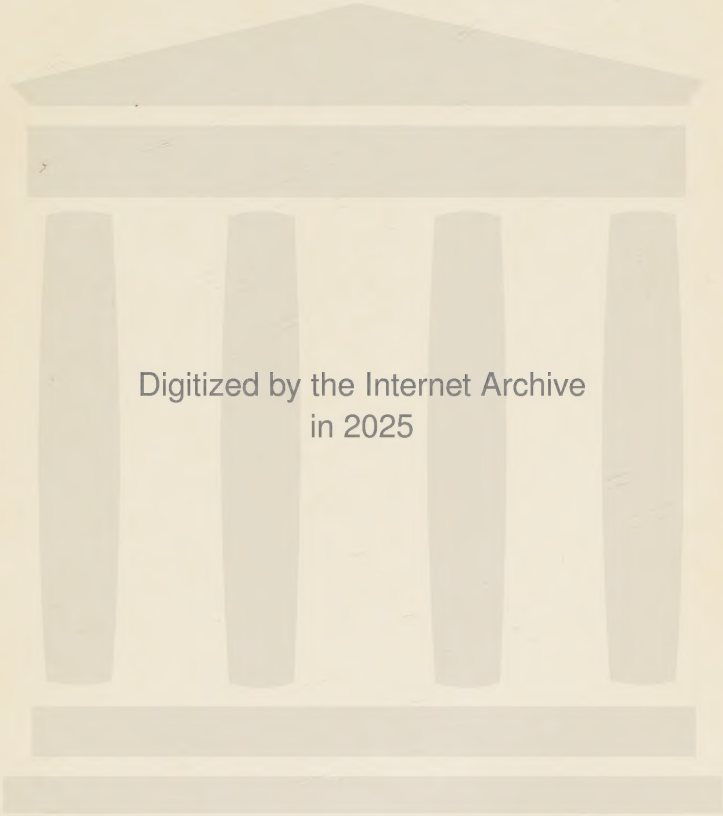
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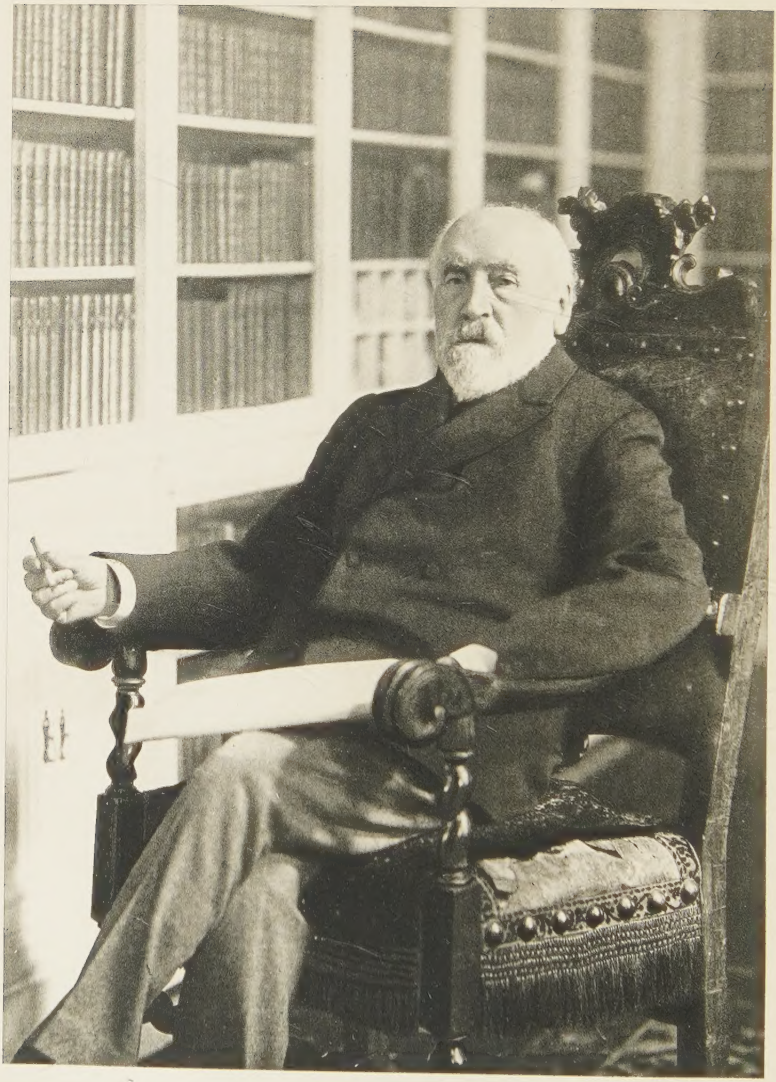

H Labouchere

THE LIFE OF
HENRY LABOUCHERE

BY

ALGAR LABOUCHERE THOROLD, 1866–

AUTHOR OF

"SIX MASTERS IN DISILLUSION," ETC.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

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Labouchere, Henry Du Pre, 1831-1912.
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To

MY COUSIN

MARY DOROTHEA

(MARCHESA DI RUDINI)

IN MEMORY OF MANY HAPPY DAYS AT

VILLA CRISTINA

Oct. 15, 1913.

27881

PREFACE

IT would be unfair both to the reader and to the subject of this memoir to let this book go forth without a word of introduction. The lot of Henry Labouchere, who was born in the reign of William IV. and lived to see George V. on the throne, was cast during a period of European development as important, perhaps, as any that modern history records. For certainly the most significant, if not the most salient, fact in the history of modern Europe is that democratisation of England which, in spite of many set-backs and obstacles, has at length been, in principle at all events, definitely achieved. To-day we are all democrats, Tories and Radicals alike. In that process, the full significance of which has still to unfold itself, Mr. Labouchere played a striking and original part. It was not always a successful one, but it was always played honestly, daringly, and, above all, characteristically. Although a convinced, and in spite of himself, if one may say so, even an enthusiastic Radical, no politician was ever less of a party man. His loyalty was given to principles, not men, and some of his bitterest attacks both in Parliament and in the press were reserved for Radical Ministries that, according to his lights, were untrue to their profession. He was also, what is not so common in politics, a thoroughly disinterested man. He sought neither office nor honour. Circumstances placed him beyond the need of money, and just as no personal feelings could ever blind him to political shortcomings in his leaders, so the strongest and most vehemently expressed disapproval of his opponents

frequently went with a marked attachment to their persons, and the strange thing is that he succeeded in convincing both sides of the House of the genuineness of this emotionally disinterested attitude.

The opinions of Englishmen are rarely disinterested, and it should never be forgotten that Henry Labouchere was, in fact, a Frenchman. French by birth, he remained, to the day of his death, French in his method of formation of opinion, in his outlook on life, in the peculiar quality of his wit. It was this that enabled, or rather obliged, him to take that curiously detached view of English ideals which was at times so disconcerting even to those who thought that they understood him. Ideals, he held, were only entitled to respect when translated into material currency. "How much £ s. d. does he believe in what he says?" he would ask concerning some fervid prophet. And if convinced that the requisite materialisation had occurred, he would accept the prophet as one more strange and amusing phenomenon in a strange and amusing universe. It would have never occurred to him that because the prophet was sincere he was right. That was a matter for reason. He once observed to me, in his whimsical way, of a colleague, that the mere denial of the existence of God did not entitle a man's opinion to be taken without scrutiny on matters of greater importance. No "mere" Englishman could have said that.

That essential foreignness rendered him hard of comprehension even to those who sympathised with his aims. For instance, he was a Radical, as sincere and convinced a Radical as the late Mr. Stead, but in a very different way. His Radicalism was based on Reason. It represented Reason applied to that particular department of human affairs called Politics, and so applied, one may add, in spite of the irrationality of most of the men called Radical politicians. English Radicalism, on the other hand, rests mainly on humanitarian sentimentalism. The *religion du clocher* of feudal England has been largely replaced by a rival cult, the

hysterical excesses of which found in him a scathing critic. He did not resent the hereditary principle in government because it was unjust, but because it was absurd, and when he fought some concrete instance of injustice, as he was constantly doing, the emotional aspect of the case made little, if any, appeal to him. He disliked injustice on rational and, as it were, æsthetic grounds. He had no passionate love of virtue, public or private; he thought it, on the whole, a sound investment, but then even sound investments sometimes go wrong. In his personal outlook on things he was as completely non-religious as a man could be. He was not anti-religious. He fully recognised the utility of religious belief in others, perhaps even in society at large, and he based this recognition not so much on the hardness of men's hearts as on the thickness of their heads. But personally he, Henry Labouchere, took no interest whatever in the matter. In philosophy he was a strict agnostic, owning Hume, for whom he had the greatest admiration, and the Kant of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as his masters. And he was remarkably well read in the works of those philosophers.

He was constitutionally suspicious of strong feelings or enthusiasm of any kind. All sensible people smoked, he used to say, in order to protect themselves against such disturbing factors. He loathed every kind of humbug. He did not, however, disdain it as a weapon. During the General Election of 1905 the Tories made a party cry of Tariff Reform; he calmly observed one day, throwing down his paper: "Well, of course I think we are right, but whether we are or not, we 've got all the bunkum on our side."

In his personal relations with others he was very sociable and courteous, retaining even in old age the fine manners of an earlier generation. He was immensely kind-hearted, and suffered fools, if not gladly, at least with politeness and equanimity. His love for children is well known. There was nothing he enjoyed more than giving children's parties,

and on these occasions would take any amount of personal trouble to ensure the pleasure of his little friends. My earliest recollection of him is, as a child of eight or so, sitting on his knee drinking in the most fascinating and horrible tales of the Siege of Paris, which he would tell me by the hour. And almost my last recollection is of his interest in a Christmas tree prepared for my own children on the very day on which he took to his bed for the last time.

These traits make up a character more familiar in France than elsewhere. In his political ideas he resembled Clémenceau more nearly than any English statesman, and in general habit of mind he was a direct descendant of Voltaire. In character he was more like Fontenelle. He had Fontenelle's moral scepticism, his personal confidence in reason qualified by his distrust of most people's reasoning powers, and his profound sense of the dangers of enthusiasm. People called him a cynic; and, if that somewhat vague term denotes one who attempts to discount the emotional factor in judgment, who endeavours to see the bare facts in as dry and objective a light as possible, a cynic he was. But he was a kind-hearted, even an affectionate cynic. It was not easy to win his regard, but, if you succeeded in winning it, you were sure of it. His own feelings he never expressed; this was not because he had none, but because of the exaggerated *pudeur* which he felt on the subject of the emotions. There was something both ridiculous and indecent to his mind in even the most restrained exhibition of affection. Briefly, he may be said to have worn a fig-leaf over his heart.

A word or two as to the method and scope of this book. In order to give a full and detailed account of the whole of Labouchere's career, it would have been necessary to write at least a dozen volumes; some sort of selection imposed itself. I have endeavoured to concentrate my own (and I hope my readers') attention on Labouchere himself. There is a danger which lurks for the biographer of a public man lest the environment of his hero—the narrative of the events

in which he played a part—should hang too loosely to his figure. There is also the danger that the frame, so to speak, should not be given its due value in the portrait. In order to appreciate the part played in public affairs by an individual, it is necessary to understand what is going on. As this book has been written for the general public, I have felt it desirable to retell certain episodes in modern politics, in which Mr. Labouchere played an important part, in greater detail than would have been necessary had I been writing for politicians. In such retelling I claim no originality. I have followed standard authorities, and the point of view of my narrative has been, to a great extent, that of Mr. Labouchere himself, although, when I have come to the conclusion that that point of view was mistaken, I have not hesitated to say so. In this way I hope that the reader may be enabled to see the inevitability of much of Labouchere's political action, which at the time, looked at piecemeal, may have appeared gratuitously mischievous.

I feel I ought to call the reader's attention to the fact that if Mr. Labouchere's many-sided life is considered as a whole, his political proceedings represent but a small part of his activity. He had lived an average lifetime before he seriously took up political work, and genuine as his principles undoubtedly were, still politics were never really more to him than a means of self-expression and, it must be said, amusement. He loved watching the spectacle of life, and he came to find in the game of politics a sort of concentrated version of life as a whole. This feeling, the strongest perhaps that he possessed, combined with a passion to enter as an effective cause into the spectacle he loved, was responsible for his political incarnation. And he had a certain half-perverse, half-childish love of mischief which he was not always at pains to restrain, and which found in the intrigues of parties and groups abundant scope for exercise. It could not have found so much scope elsewhere, and was the motive power of much of his political action, particularly towards

the end of his time in Parliament. After his retirement indeed, when politics had literally become nothing but a game to him, he would watch the cards as they fell with complete detachment from party views: "I wish I was entering politics now as a young Tory blood," was a frequent comment on public events during his last years.

Of course, he had his own way of putting things, which was not that of other people, and this brings me to the part in life as to which both friends and foes are agreed that he achieved complete success. Whatever else he was or was not, everybody is agreed that he was the greatest English wit since Sheridan. His gently modulated voice had a good deal to do with his conversational success, and the bland quiet manner with which the most startling remarks would be accompanied gave them weight, if not point. Still, even in cold print many of his sayings and appreciations will live as long as men laugh from intellectual motives. "I do not mind Mr. Gladstone always having an ace up his sleeve, but I do object to his always saying that Providence put it there," is a dictum which will not soon be forgotten. That observation, gently drawled out one evening in the lobby of the House of Commons, is a specimen of hundreds. I am persuaded that originally he had no intention of being witty, but supposed his quips and paradoxes to represent the bare facts expressed with the greatest economy of language. It is certain that no one was more surprised than he at the entertainment people found in the *Letters of a Besieged Resident*. He soon discovered his reputation for wit and deliberately made use of it, both as a shield and as a weapon of defence. It also served another purpose. There was a strong tendency to indolence in him that was gratified by his success in turning off awkward or puzzling questions with some witty or irrelevant remark. If this analysis is correct, it throws light on the nature of his wit, which consisted largely in a naïve and shameless revelation of the *Secret de Polichinelle*. For he said what every one thought but did n't

dare say. The originality of his mind really consisted in the complete absence in his case of those conventional superstructures which imprison most of us. When he replied to some one who asked him if he liked Mme. X——, "Oh yes, I like her well enough, but I should n't mind if she dropped down dead in front of me on the carpet," he was only saying what many of us think but would never dream of saying even to ourselves of some of our friends.

It is a commonplace of moralists to say that human nature is full of contradictions. A subtler critic of man than the mere moralist would add that much of men's time is spent in smoothing out, or, at all events, conciliating, these contradictions. We choose a possible type of humanity—Aristotle, or some other Greek, gave an exhaustive list of them—and see ourselves in the part we have selected. According to our imaginative power and our strength of will we succeed more or less in playing that part at least for social purposes. Years pass and the mask grows to the face, as in the case of Mr. Beerbohm's *Happy Hypocrite*, and our friends and acquaintances cease in time to distinguish between our pose and our character. But there are moments when the mask cracks and close observers have their surprises.

Mr. Labouchere gave up early in life any consecutive attempt to make himself appear different to his real nature. A fragment of an early diary which I have utilised does indeed discuss the possibilities of success to the writer, and criticises, in scathing terms, achievements up-to-date. But this document, interesting and amusing as it is, is itself but a piece of boyish introspectiveness. In point of fact he was a terribly sincere person, partly from pride and partly from indolence. Had he been willing to condescend to insincerity, he would have been too lazy to do so for long. Here, then, was an additional stumbling-block. It is easy enough to understand a pose, or even a succession of poses, but a person who says neither more nor less than exactly what he means,

and means exactly what he says, not because he thinks he ought to do so, or wishes to be understood as doing so, but because so, and not otherwise, his nature spontaneously expresses itself, is, in our present social state, almost unintelligible. What saved him under these circumstances from becoming a "prophet" was the pliability of intelligence that enabled him to understand other people and the sense of humour that enabled him to enjoy them.

I have selected from the voluminous correspondence put at my disposal only those letters which throw most light on Mr. Labouchere's state of mind and the part he played in political events with which he was connected.

I have to thank my many relatives and friends who have allowed me to make use of their letters from Mr. Labouchere, and also my cousin, M. Georges Labouchère, for communicating the result of his researches on the life of my great-grandfather. Among old friends of Mr. Labouchere, who have given me personal reminiscences of him, I have especially to thank Mrs. Emily Crawford, Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, Lord Welby, Sir Audley Gosling, and Mr. Robert Bennett, the editor of *Truth*, whose help has been invaluable in the narrative of Mr. Labouchere's founding of *Truth* and of its subsequent fortunes. Most of all, my thanks are due to Mr. Thomas Hart Davies, without whose constant sympathy and assistance this biography could not have been written.

ALGAR L. THOROLD.

12 CATHERINE STREET, WESTMINSTER.
August 15, 1913.

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From a photograph by Messrs. Brogi of Florence, taken in 1905 at Villa Cristina, Florence.

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THE LIFE OF HENRY LABOUCHERE

THE LIFE OF LABOUCHERE

CHAPTER I

THE LABOUCHERE FAMILY

SOME forty miles south of Bayonne, on the right bank of the Gave, lies the little town of Orthez, the ancient capital of Béarn. Famous for the obstinacy of its resistance to the apostolic spirit of Louis XIV. and the excellence of its manufactured cloth, Orthez was further distinguished during the Wars of Religion by the possession of a Protestant university founded by Jeanne d'Albret in which Theodore Beza was professor. In 1664, the most Christian King sent his intendant Foucault to deal with the nest of heretics. Foucault did not waste time in theological subtleties, but gave the inhabitants twenty days in which to conform under penalty of a dragonnade. They did so unanimously, but there still remain more Protestants in Orthez than in any other town of Béarn.

Among the cloth merchants of Orthez none were more distinguished than the Labouchères. According to the Frères Haag, the compilers of *La France Protestante*, their name should be Barrier de Labouchère, the patronymic which they came to adopt being in reality the name of a property in the possession of the family. The earliest known ancestor of the Labouchères seems to have been a

certain Jean Guyon Barrier, who married in 1621 one Catherine de la Broue.

Pierre-César, the founder of the British branch of the family and the grandfather of the subject of this memoir, was born at The Hague in 1772. He was the second son of Matthieu Labouchère and Marie-Madeleine Molière. His father, who, in consequence of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had been sent to England for his education, had subsequently settled in Holland. Pierre-César was sent at the age of thirteen to learn his uncle Pierre's business at Nantes,[1] where he remained until 1790, at which date he entered the house of Hope at Amsterdam as French clerk. In this humble position he laid the foundations of the great fortune and financial career which were to be his. The rise of the young French clerk was rapid. In six years he was a partner in the house of Hope and had married Dorothy, sister of Alexander Baring, who had become a partner in the Dutch firm at the same time as his French brother-in-law. The well-known story of the clever ruse by which Pierre-César won the hand of his bride and also his partnership in the house of Hope was told to the present writer some twenty years ago by the Rev. Alexander Baring[2] as follows:

Pierre-César was sent by Mr. John Hope to England to see Sir Francis Baring on some business, and fell in love with Sir Francis's third daughter Dorothy. Before leaving England he asked Sir Francis to permit him to become engaged to his daughter. Sir Francis refused. Pierre-César then said: "Would it make any difference to your decision if you knew that Mr. Hope was about to take me into partnership?" Sir Francis unhesitatingly admitted that

[1] Presumably Uncle Pierre had conformed and stuck to it.

[2] The portraits of Pierre-César Labouchère and Dorothy his wife, now in my possession, were then at Farnham Castle, and Mr. Baring was visiting my father, the then Bishop of Winchester, when he related to me this anecdote of my great-grandparents.

it would. Pierre-César then went back to Holland and suggested to Mr. Hope that he might be taken into partnership. On Mr. Hope discouraging the idea, he said: "Would it make any difference to your decision if you knew that I was engaged to the daughter of Sir Francis Baring?" Mr. Hope replied, "Certainly." Whereupon the wily clerk said: "Well, I *am* engaged to Miss Dorothy Baring." That very day he was able to write to Sir Francis announcing the news of his admission to partnership in the house of Hope, and in the same letter he claimed the hand of his bride.[1]

The following picture of Pierre-César by a contemporary is interesting. The writer was Vincent Nolte, for many years a clerk in the house of Hope at Amsterdam. "Mr. Labouchère was at that time but twenty-two, yet ere long assumed the highly respectable position of head of the firm, the first in the world, and studied the manners of a French courtier previous to the Revolution: these he soon made so thoroughly his own, that they seemed to be a part of his own nature. He made a point of distinguishing himself in everything he undertook by a certain perfection, and carried this feeling so far that, on account of the untractable lack of elasticity of his body and a want of ear for music which nature had denied him, he for eighteen years deemed it necessary to take dancing-lessons, because he saw that others surpassed him in the graceful accomplishment. It was almost painful to see him dance. The old school required, in the French quadrille, some *entrechats* and one or two pirouettes, and the delay they occasioned him always threw him out of time. I have often seen the old gentleman, already more than fifty, return from a quadrille covered with perspiration. Properly speaking, he had no refined education, understood but very

[1] The story is confirmed by the Hon. Francis Henry Baring. Mr. F. H. Baring was told it by the late Thomas Charles Baring, M.P., the son of the Bishop of Durham. Mr. T. C. Baring was for many years a partner in Baring Bros., where he probably heard the story. Sir Henry Lucy, in his *More Passages by the Way*, mentions that Mr. Labouchère himself believed the story to be true.

little of the fine arts, and, notwithstanding his shrewdness and quickness of perception, possessed no natural powers of wit, and consequently was all the more eager to steal the humour of other people. He once repeated to myself as a witty remark of his own to one of his clerks, the celebrated answer of De Sartines, a former chief of the French police, to one of his subordinates who asked for an increase of pay in the following words: 'You do not give me enough—still I must live!' The reply he got was: 'I do not perceive the necessity of that!' Now, so hard-hearted a response was altogether foreign to Mr. Labouchère's disposition, as he was a man of most excellent and generous feeling. He had, assuredly, without intention, fallen into the singular habit of speaking his mother-tongue—the French—with an almost English intonation, and English with a strong French accent. But he was most of all remarkable for the chivalric idea of honour in mercantile transactions, which he constantly evinced, and which I never, during my whole life, met with elsewhere, in the same degree, however numerous may have been the high-minded and honourable merchants with whom I have been thrown in contact. He fully possessed what the French call *des idées chevaleresques*."[1]

In 1800 Pierre-César re-established himself for a time in England, whither Hope's had been temporarily transferred after the invasion of Holland by Pichegru. A few years later he became involved in an interesting and delicate political negotiation.

In April, 1810, Napoleon, whose marriage with Marie Louise had filled him with peaceful aspirations, surveyed the world that he had conquered and decided that, for the moment, he had conquered enough. To consolidate his empire and his dependencies, peace was necessary. The only obstacle to peace was England—England who had never bowed before his eagles and only grudgingly admitted his

[1] Vincent Nolte, *Fifty Years in Both Hemispheres*. American translation, 1854.

existence. Negotiation with England was imperative, but how to negotiate, and by what means? What had he to offer Mr. Pitt? A substantial argument presented itself in the condition of Holland. Louis Buonaparte had disappointed his autocratic brother as an allied sovereign, and it was the Emperor's intention to remove him from the Dutch throne and unite the whole of the Netherlands to the Empire. This course could not fail to be disagreeable to the English, who would then be flanked by the French on two sides. So it occurred to Napoleon that, by leaving Holland her independence, he would be giving England a substantial *quid pro quo* for the withdrawal of British troops from the Peninsula. Evidently, however, he could not himself directly open negotiations. Not only would such action lower his prestige, but it was doubtful whether those infernal islanders would consent to treat with him. The negotiations had to be opened by way of Holland. King Louis' Government must not appear in it. There were prudent men of affairs there who could be trusted with the delicate task. Louis was delighted with the idea. He would retain his estate as an independent sovereign, the commerce of Europe would once more circulate freely to the replenishment of his subjects' coffers, and his terrible brother's ambitions would be effectively circumscribed.

Fouché, who, unknown to the Emperor, had already sent a private agent to London to discuss with the British Cabinet possible conditions of peace, entered enthusiastically into the project and designated Pierre-César as in every way the most suitable person to be entrusted with the affair. His position in the world of business as a partner of Hope in Amsterdam and of Baring in London was of the highest, and his father-in-law, Sir Francis Baring, who had been one of the principal directors of "John Company," was an intimate friend of Wellesley, the English Foreign Secretary, with whom he had spent some time in India.

Labouchère was to present himself informally to Wellesley,

not as an envoy of the King of Holland and still less as the mouthpiece of Napoleon, but in the names of Roell, Van Der Heim, and Mollerus, three Dutch statesmen who professed to have been initiated by their King into all the secrets of the French Cabinet. He was to explain to the English Foreign Secretary that the marriage of Napoleon had altered his position and had caused him to desire the peace of Europe as a necessary condition of the consolidation of his Empire, and that, in order to induce the English Government to abandon hostilities, he was prepared to forego his intention of uniting Holland to his dominions. The Dutch Cabinet, aware of the Emperor's views, had hastened to open informal communications in order at one stroke to secure the peace of Europe and to retain the independence of their country. All having been arranged, Labouchère crossed from Brielle to Yarmouth and posted to London on his secret mission.

As a matter of fact the moment was not well chosen for its success. After the retirement, on the Catholic question, of Grenville and Grey, who had continued the Fox-Pitt coalition, the old Duke of Portland, who had been Home Secretary in Mr. Pitt's first Government, became Prime Minister. He maintained his power with difficulty: Canning and Castlereagh, respectively Home Secretary and Foreign Minister, quarrelled, left the Cabinet in order to fight a duel, and did not return to it. Lord Chatham did not survive the results of the expedition to Walcheren, and shortly afterwards Portland himself died. Mr. Perceval and Lord Wellesley were the most important persons left in the Cabinet. Perceval, who had been Portland's Chancellor of the Exchequer, kissed hands as Prime Minister on December 2, 1809, and Wellesley took the place of Bathurst as Foreign Secretary. Perceval was a clever lawyer and a bitter and prejudiced Tory; Wellesley's hereditary politics were qualified by suave manners, an enlightened spirit, and an unusual talent for clear and eloquent statement. Less passionate than Perceval, he had not the Prime Minister's influence

with the party, but he enjoyed an immense reputation in the country which was daily increased by the news of his brother's gallant deeds at the front. The position of the Government, in spite of their parliamentary majority, was not very strong. They held their power by that most uncertain tenure—success in arms.

The opposition, led by Grenville and Grey, rejoiced in the avowed favour of the Prince of Wales, whom an accident, such was the state of the King's health, might any day call to the regency, and even to the throne. The Prince had openly declared himself against the war, and the leaders of the opposition argued forcibly, in and out of season, against its continuance. The militarism of the country was not, however, to be checked in this way. The news of one victory outweighed much argument. But news was not always of victories. Forty thousand English troops had been forced to retire before Antwerp, with a loss of fifteen thousand from death and disease. This calamity more than balanced the victory of Talavera. Perceval stuck to his war policy with blind and furious determination. He no doubt felt that his one chance of retaining office was to do so. Wellesley, on the other hand, in spite of the glory won by his family through the war, was open to reason on the subject. He had already received politely Captain Fagan, a high officer in Condé's army, whom Fouché had sent over on his own responsibility to feel the way toward conditions of peace. He had received him politely, but had answered him evasively to the effect that the King's Government was by no means bent on continuing the war at *all* costs, but would gladly entertain proposals of peace if they were advanced by responsible, fully accredited agents and were compatible with the honour of the two nations. Labouchère was unable to get anything more definite out of him. But Wellesley, reserved with the French agent, opened himself more fully to his old friend Sir Francis Baring. To him he explained that no member of the Cabinet believed in Napoleon's good

faith. He personally saw nothing in Labouchère's mission but a trap laid for English public opinion by the supreme adventurer, and judged that nothing was to be gained by playing into his hand. Moreover, the Government would never abandon Spain to Joseph or Sicily to Murat, and would in no circumstances consent to the loss of Malta. The fullest preliminary assurances on these points were the *sine qua non* of any successful negotiation.

Sir Francis Baring, who was a sagacious man, communicated this conversation, together with his personal comments thereon, to Labouchère. It was evident, he said, that England had grown accustomed to the war, and would not abandon it except under the stress of a reverse impossible to predict, and that the nation would never lose all they had fought for in the Peninsula by yielding Spain to a Buonaparte prince. He suggested, without any official authority, an arrangement which, leaving Malta to England, would give Naples to Murat, Sicily to the Neapolitan Bourbons, and would restore Spain to Ferdinand, save for the provinces on the French side of the Ebro, which might be given to Napoleon as an indemnity for the expenses of the war. Convinced that nothing further was to be obtained in London, Labouchère returned to Holland and sent to King Louis at Paris the meagre results of his mission. Unfortunately, Napoleon was as well accustomed to war as England. As soon as he had received Labouchère's reply, he gave up the notion of using Holland as a weapon against England and determined to settle his affairs with his brother independently of the general situation. Nevertheless, he did not wish to entirely let fall the indirect relations on which Labouchère had entered with the English Cabinet, and sent him a reply to be transmitted through Sir Francis Baring to Lord Wellesley. The Emperor's reply was perhaps more statesmanlike than might have been expected. If England was accustomed to the war, the French were even more in their element on the battlefield. France was victorious, rich, prosperous, obliged,

no doubt, to pay a high price for sugar and coffee, but not reduced to the point of doing without those luxuries. She could support the situation for a long time yet. If, in these conditions, he thought of peace, it was because in the new position created by his marriage with an Austrian archduchess he was anxious to terminate the struggle between the old order and the new. As for the kingdoms he had created, it was not to be thought that he would sacrifice any of them. Never would he dethrone his brothers Joseph, Murat, Louis, and Jerome. But the destinies of Portugal and Sicily were still in suspense; these two countries, Hanover, the Hanseatic cities, and the Spanish colonies might still be dealt with. In any case, it might be possible to mitigate the horrors of war. He had been obliged to reply by the decrees of Berlin and Milan to the orders-in-council issued by the British Cabinet, and the sea had been converted into a stage for violence of every description. This state of things was perhaps more dangerous for England than for France, since an Anglo-American war might easily result. If the English Government agreed with these appreciations they had but to relax their laws of blockade. France would follow suit, Holland and the Hanseatic towns would retain their independence, the sea would be opened to neutrals, the war would lose some of its bitterness, and, possibly, in time a complete understanding between the two nations might be reached. Such was Napoleon's, on the whole, judicious reply, and on these terms, and on these terms only, was Labouchère authorised to make any further attempts at negotiation.

But Napoleon counted without Fouché. That brilliant and unscrupulous person, who had been recently raised to the important Ministry of Police with the title of Duc d'Otrante, was a peace fanatic. In every day that the war continued he saw danger to the Empire. The failure of the Labouchère mission, in which he no doubt felt his self-love wounded, since he had himself indicated the envoy, disappointed him profoundly. He determined to bring about

peace himself, and relied on his success to justify himself in the Emperor's eyes. It would have been a dangerous thing to do under any government: it was a piece of insanity under a master so absolute, so vigilant, as Napoleon. He accordingly sent one Ouvrard to Amsterdam to urge Labouchère to reopen negotiations with the British Cabinet on conditions much more favourable to England than the Emperor had made. Labouchère naturally thought that Fouché once more represented Napoleon, and recommenced negotiations on a basis much more satisfactory to English policy. The basis was different indeed. According to Ouvrard, the Emperor would modify his views on Sicily, Spain, the Spanish colonies, Portugal, and Holland; he was earnestly desirous of peace, and he shared the hostility of the British Cabinet to the Americans. In order to give Labouchère more credit with Wellesley, Fouché offered to give up to him a mysterious personage called Baron Kolli, an English police agent, who had been visiting Valençay to arrange the escape of Ferdinand. Kolli had been arrested by the French troops who had charge of the imprisoned King. The arrest had been considered an important event by the Cabinet of St. Cloud. To all this Ouvrard added a good deal of his own, and Labouchère could not do otherwise than believe what he was told. Accordingly he reopened negotiations by letter with Wellesley.[1]

In the following month, Napoleon, who was making one of his tours of personal inspection in the Netherlands, discussed the Labouchère negotiations with his brother Louis at Antwerp. By a curious chance he had caught sight on his journey of Ouvrard, who was on his way from Amsterdam to Paris. The Emperor's promptness of mind had at once suggested to him that Ouvrard, who enjoyed the favour of Fouché and had business relations with Labouchère, was probably mixing himself up in what did not concern him,

[1] Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire;* Louis Madelin, *Fouché.* See also *Times*, March 16, 1811, for the English account.

perhaps giving advice which was not wanted, or trying to float some speculation on the probabilities of peace. With the presentiment of his genius he at once forbade Labouchère to have any relations with Ouvrard and ordered him to send immediately all the correspondence that had been exchanged between Amsterdam and London to the King. Labouchère at once communicated all his own letters and those he had received from London.

The blow fell on June 2 at St. Cloud, where the Emperor, the day after his return from Holland, convoked a Council of Ministers to meet him. Fouché, in charge of the most important portfolio of the imperial Cabinet, was naturally present. Napoleon turned and rent him. What was Ouvrard doing in Holland? Had Fouché sent him there? Was he or was he not an accomplice of this preposterous intrigue? Fouché, surprised and upset by this sudden and unexpected attack, could find nothing better to say than that Ouvrard was a busybody who was always mixing himself up in other people's business and that it was wiser to pay no attention to anything he might say. The astute personage must indeed have been upset to attempt to "pay" Napoleon with such words. Ouvrard and his papers were at once seized, the mission being entrusted not to Fouché, who as Minister of the Police would naturally have received such an order, but to Sazary, an aide-de-camp whom the Emperor had made Duc de Rovigo and in whom he had complete confidence. Ouvrard's papers revealed at once the extent to which the intrigue had been pushed and of Fouché's complicity. The next day Fouché was dismissed from the Ministry of Police, where he was succeeded by Rovigo, and appointed Governor of Rome. When Napoleon had anything to do he did it quickly.

He did not rest there, however. He was determined to get to the *fin fond* of these singular negotiations. Ouvrard, kept in prison, was constantly examined, and Labouchère was summoned to Paris and ordered to bring all the papers

still in his hands. It appeared, from a comparison of these with those already seized, that Labouchère had acted in perfectly good faith, and the whole responsibility rested with Fouché and Ouvrard. Fouché's disgrace was complete. As soon as the Emperor discovered the episode of the Fagan mission he turned once more on the luckless minster and demanded all the papers relative to that affair. Fouché replied that they were of no importance and that he had burned them. Napoleon, on hearing this, gave way to one of his appalling exhibitions of rage, took away from Fouché the governorship of Rome, and exiled him to Aix in Provence. So ended this curious affair in which Pierre-César Labouchère had served his country faithfully and intelligently to the extent which circumstances permitted. Some years later he was to serve his country perhaps more signally, and certainly more effectively.

When in 1817 France was beginning the task of reconstruction, the principal difficulty in the way of the ministers of Louis XVIII. was the very serious financial situation. By the treaty of November 20 of the preceding year, the country was pledged to pay to foreigners no less than seven hundred million francs in money in the course of five years, with an additional sum of a hundred and thirty million for the pay of the 150,000 foreign troops which occupied the country. There were also numerous debts, both at home and abroad, the payment of which had been guaranteed by the treaties of 1814 and 1815. The ordinary revenue was useless to meet such heavy charges, and extraordinary taxation, in the state of the country, would have spelt ruin. It was necessary to have recourse to credit. But how to obtain a loan? France was not in a state which could inspire financiers with much confidence. In these circumstances Messrs. Labouchère and Baring once more placed themselves at the service of the French Government. They purchased nearly twenty-seven million francs' worth of government five per cent. *rente*, and thus restored French

credit. Their action was, no doubt, not purely disinterested, as they bought the *rente* at an average price of 56.50 and obtained an interest of nine per cent. on their money. Still, the difficulty of the moment was to find anybody to do it at any price.[1] A private journal of the period, kept by the husband of a niece of Sir Francis Baring, consequently a first cousin by marriage of Mme. Pierre-César Labouchère, gives the following account of the transaction:[2] "The 'Alliance Loan' of the Barings at Paris in 1816 probably doubled his (Pierre-César's) fortune, and he soon after quitted business, and settled altogether in England, living at Hylands, a property he bought in Essex, and in Hamilton Place, where his home was frequented by many distinguished people and diplomatists."

Two sons were born to Pierre-César and Dorothy Labouchère. The elder, Henry, was born in 1798, and made for himself a social and political career of decided distinction, as a Whig of the old school, a certain primness and conventionality of character enabling him to perform the part successfully in private as in public life. He took a first-class in classics at Oxford, and in 1832 found himself a Lord of the Admiralty. He became subsequently Vice-President of the Board of Trade, Under-Secretary to the Colonies, President of the Board of Trade, Chief Secretary of Ireland, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was raised to the peerage in 1859, when he assumed the title of Baron Taunton, choosing the name of the borough he had represented in Parliament for thirty years. It was at Taunton in 1835 that he opposed and defeated Dizzy by a majority of a hundred and seventy, when, on his appointment as Master of the Mint under Lord Melbourne, he offered himself to his constituents for re-election. His primness and conven-

[1] *Histoire de Mon Temps: Mémoires du Chancelier Pasquier*, publiées par le Duc d'Audriffet-Pasquier, 1789–1830.

[2] The journal was written by Mr. T. L. Mallet, who married Lucy, daughter of Charles Baring. I am indebted for the extract to Lord Northbrook.

tionality found on this occasion an admirable foil in the manner and appearance of his opponent, who was "very showily attired in a bottle-green frock coat, a waistcoat of the most extravagant pattern, the front of which was almost covered with glittering chains, and in fancy pattern pantaloons." The judicious electors of Taunton preferred Mr. Labouchere's more solid qualities.

Lord Taunton died very suddenly on July 13, 1869. He was twice married, first to Frances, daughter of Sir Thomas Baring,[1] and secondly to Lady Mary Howard, a daughter of Lord Carlisle. He left no sons. Consequently the bulk of his fortune descended to his brother John Labouchere's eldest son Henry, the future member for Northampton and editor of *Truth*.

The younger Henry Labouchere's earliest recollections carried him back to his childish visits to his grandfather in Hamilton Place, where Prince Talleyrand, then Ambassador to the Court of St. James (1830–34), was a frequent visitor. "I have always taken a special interest in Talleyrand," he wrote when he was sixty, "because he gave me when a child a very gorgeous box of dominoes."[2]

The elder Henry Labouchere does not seem at first sight to have shared any traits with his nephew and namesake. The only point on which they may be said to have agreed was their love for America. Lord Taunton as a young man travelled much in the United States with Lord Derby, and he had important business interests there as well as in South America, arising out of the commercial enterprises of the

[1] Yet another link between the Labouchères and the Barings was forged by the marriage, in 1837, of Lady Taunton's sister, Emily Baring, to Mrs. John Labouchere's brother, the Rev. William Maxwell Du Pre. His sister, Caroline Du Pre, became the wife of the Rev. Spenser Thornton, who was a grandson of Godfrey Thornton by Jane his wife, a daughter of an influential director of the French hospital, Stephen Peter Godin, whose family note-book was published in the January number of the *Genealogist* (*The Labouchère Pedigree*, by Henry Wagner, F.S.A., 1913).

[2] *Truth*, March 19, 1891.

house of Hope. He acquired in the course of his travels a strong liking for American institutions and a genuine affection for the American people, a feeling which, as we shall see, was shared by his nephew.

Mr. John Labouchere predeceased Lord Taunton by six years, and it was often presumed by persons who knew the family but slightly that the younger Henry Labouchere was the son of Lord Taunton, which mistake gave the young wit the opportunity of making one of his best-known repartees. On one occasion a gentleman, to whom Henry was introduced for the first time, opened the conversation by remarking: "I have just heard your father make an admirable speech in the House of Lords." "The House of Lords!" replied Mr. Labouchere, assuming an air of intense interest, "well, I always *have* wondered where my father went to when he died."

CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

(1831–1853)

JOHN PETER LABOUCHERE,[1] the younger son of Pierre-César Labouchère, was a partner in the firm of Hope at Amsterdam, and, later, a partner in the bank of Williams, Deacon, Thornton, and Labouchere. He married Mary Louisa Du Pre,[2] second daughter of Mr. James Du Pre of Wilton Park in Buckinghamshire, and granddaughter of Sir William Maxwell of Monteith, by whom he had a family of three sons and six daughters, of whom one son and four daughters are still living. He was the owner of Broome Hall in Surrey, and his town house was at 16 Portland Place. He was an extremely religious man and well known for his charitable and philanthropic labours. At one period his elder brother, Lord Taunton, then Mr. Henry Labouchere, also had a house in Portland Place, and he used to relate that he was constantly pestered by persons confusing him with his brother the banker, who called to ask for his help and patronage with regard to various evangelical enterprises. It was his habit to reply to them: "You have made a mistake, sir; the *good* Mr. Labouchere lives at No. 16."

Henry Du Pre, the eldest son of John Labouchere, was born at 16 Portland Place on November 9, 1831. His

[1] Born Aug. 14, 1799; died Jan. 29, 1863. [2] Died April 29, 1874.

education, had he been a docile pupil, would, according to his father's wishes, have been that of a conventional English boy with some reasonable expectations of a fine career in the financial or the diplomatic world, into either of which he had an easy *entrée* through the influence of the Labouchere family. But he displayed, at the very beginning of his career, a curious and original character, which did not seem to follow easily any of the known paths of learning marked out for the youth of his period. The earliest repartee recorded of him was made to the headmaster of the private school to which he was sent at the age of six. Before breakfast, the morning after his arrival, the new boys were placed in a row, and asked whether they had all washed their teeth. One by one they answered in the affirmative, until came the turn of Henry. "No," he answered firmly. "And pray why not?" wound up the master indignantly, after a long lecture on the enormity of the crime of neglecting the cleanliness of the teeth. "Because I have n't got any," smiled Henry suddenly. He was just at the stage of changing his baby teeth, and his toothless gums were displayed for the full benefit of the discomfited moralist.[1] Nearly fifty years later Labouchere published the following account of his school-days:

"When I was a boy I was sent to a school which was kept by one of the most ill-conditioned ruffians that ever wielded a cane. He used to suffer from lumbago (this was my only consolation), and would crawl on his hands and knees into the schoolroom; then he would rear up and commence caning a few boys, merely, I truly believe, from a notion that the exercise would be beneficial to his muscles. The man was ignorant, brutal, mean, and cruel, and yet his school somehow had a reputation as an excellent one — mainly, I suspect, because he had the effrontery to charge a high price for the privilege of being at it."[2]

[1] I am indebted to Mrs. Hillyer, Mr. Labouchere's eldest sister, for the above anecdote.

[2] *Truth*, May 28, 1885.

He went to Eton in the September of 1844, and was entered at the house of Edward Balston, who afterwards became headmaster. Dr. Hawtrey, whose classical teaching has been described as "more picturesque than useful," was headmaster during the three years and a half that Henry Labouchere was at the school. The boy seems to have been a fairly idle scholar, and nothing remarkable in the way of a sportsman. He was exceedingly small for his age and, in consequence, a light weight, so that he was much in request on summer afternoons as a "cox." Among his contemporaries at Eton were the late Lord Avebury, the late Sir George Tryon, Lord Roberts, the late Sir Arthur Blackwood, Sir Algernon West, and Lord Welby. Lord Welby recollects that he had, even in his Eton days, the dry, cynical manner and original mode of verbal expression which, later on, marked him out from his fellows.

Labouchere fell under a suspicion of bullying whilst at Balston's, and the consequences he was forced to undergo are interesting as illustrative of the Eton justice of the forties. He was in the fifth form, and the elder boys of his house summoned the captain of the lower boys, one Barton, who was a good deal bigger than Labouchere, to fight him in the house. Barton had no quarrel on his own account with Labouchere—it was a case of representative justice. The fight was arranged to take place in one of the rooms after tea, it being the uncomfortable practice in those days always to fight after a meal. Labouchere and Barton punched away at each other for an hour or so, until the big boys went down to supper, when they were allowed to rest. After the elders had supped, the fight was renewed until Labouchere succumbed. However, it was generally allowed that he had made a good show before a bigger man than himself. The next day the eyes of the combatants were bunged up, their noses swollen to bottle size, and their complexions coloured bright blue and green with bruises. They could not go into school. Balston was obliged to take notice of what had hap-

pened, which he did with well-simulated indignation, and, when they were able to return to school, reported them to Hawtrey, who "swished" them both.[1]

Another contemporary of Mr. Labouchere's at Eton, the late Frederick Morton Eden, related a story about him at a dinner given to him some years ago, as the senior "Old Etonian," in the School Hall of the College. Whilst the old chapel was being restored, a temporary chapel of wood and iron was run up. The corrugated iron roof made the heat intolerable during the summer months, so Labouchere hit upon a plan to put a stop to the nuisance of "chapel in the shanty." One boy was to pretend to faint and four others were to carry him out. A fifth was to follow bearing the hats of the performers. The plan worked admirably. The service was brought to a temporary stop and the boys, as soon as they were outside, scampered merrily off and procured some agreeable refreshment. The repetition of this comedy, of course, aroused the suspicion of the masters, but nevertheless, like many of Labouchere's intrigues in later life, it produced eventually the desired effect. There was no more chapel during the hot weather until the restoration of the old chapel was complete.

A reminiscence of his Eton days that Mr. Labouchere was fond of relating has already found its way into print, but will bear repetition, as all may not have read it. One day, his store of pocket-money being at high-water mark, he conceived the notion of doing the man about town for an hour or two; so, having dressed himself with scrupulous care, he sallied forth, and, entering the best hotel in the place, engaged a private room, and in a lordly manner ordered a bowl of punch. The waiter stared but brought the liquor, and went away. The boy, having tasted it, found it horrible. He promptly poured it into the lower compartment

[1] I am indebted to Lord Welby for the above anecdote. He heard it from the late Lord Bristol, who was Labouchere's fag at Eton, and also from the late Mr. Anthony Hammond.

of an antique oak sideboard. He waited a little to see whether it would run out on to the carpet. Luckily the drawer was watertight, and Labouchere rang the bell again and proudly ordered from the amazed waiter a second bowl of punch. He poured this also into the oak sideboard, and in a few minutes rang for the bill, tipped the waiter majestically, and swaggered out of the hotel, quite satisfied that he had won the admiration and respect of the whole staff.

After the Christmas half of 1847, Labouchere left Eton. He was then in his seventeenth year, and, before going to the university, it was thought advisable to place him for a year or two with a private tutor.

It is interesting, before we leave Labouchere's Etonian career, to record his views on fagging, that venerable institution, which is generally considered by Englishmen to have contributed so largely towards their superiority to the rest of mankind. "When I was at Eton," he wrote, "fags thought that all was fair in regard to their masters. I had a master who used to send me every morning to a farmhouse to get him cream for his breakfast. On my return I invariably added a trifle of my milk to the cream and thickened my milk with an infusion of my master's cream. Thus, by the light of that revenge, which Lord Bacon calls a 'rude sense of justice,' I anticipated the watering process which has been practised by so many public companies. Sometimes he would have jugged hare. These occasions were my grand opportunity, and, unknown to him, I used to pour out into my own slop basin a portion of the savoury mess, and conceal the deficit by an addition of pure water. Fagging in fact, is productive of more evil to the fag than the fagger. The former learns all the tricks and dodges of the slave."[1]

Labouchere's matured judgment of Dr. Hawtrey was expressed as follows:

> Dr. Hawtrey was the headmaster when I was at Eton. He was

[1] *Truth*, Aug. 8, 1877.

an amiable and kindly man and a fine gentleman. He probably flogged about twenty boys every day, on an average. He did it with exquisite politeness, and, except on rare occasions, the whole thing was a farce. Four cuts were the ordinary application, and ten cuts were never exceeded. The proceedings took place in public, and any boy who had a taste for the thing might be a spectator. If the victim flinched there was a howl of execration. Far from objecting to this, the doctor approved of it. I remember once that a boy fell on his knees, and implored him to spare him. "I shall not condescend to flog you, but I leave you to your young friends," said the doctor. I happened to be one of the young friends, and I remember aiding in kicking the boy round the quadrangle for about half an hour.[1]

The reflections of boys on the education to which they have been subjected are remarkably interesting, because they are so exceedingly rare. We have Rousseau's criticism of his upbringing, but it was penned when youth was behind, and it is tinged with an affectation of intellectual detachment and middle-aged self-consciousness which robs it of the spontaneity which would be its only recommendation. St. Augustine, when he wrote his confessions, knew far too much to be able to write with simple sincerity of his foolish youth. Labouchere's early note-books, unlike these masterpieces, possess the uncommon value of being youth's judgments upon youth, written with all the hardy ingenuousness of a clever boy, who was, besides being clever, extremely young for his age.[2] About the period of his life which has been described Labouchere wrote, at the age of twenty-one: "I will give . . . an outline of my life, and the different courses that led to my discovery of early wisdom. I went through the usual numbers of schools, by which I learnt that an English education, for the time and money that it consumes, is the worst that the world has yet produced. One

[1] *Truth*, Jan. 31, 1889.

[2] The note-books from which the quotations in this chapter have been taken are in the possession of the Rev. John Labouchere of Sculthorpe Rectory, Fakenham.

clergyman alone of all my masters knew how to teach. His conduct was perfectly arbitrary, and he gave no reason for it—while, in the several branches of learning, his pupils either made rapid progress or left his house. My acquaintance with him was of short duration. He insisted on my teaching in an infant school on Sunday, or leaving his house—and I foolishly preferred the latter. I was then too young to go to college, so I was transferred to a clergyman in Norfolk, the very antipodes of my former master. Here I amused myself, and was flattered for a year or two, and then went to the university."

In February, 1850, he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge. His tutor was Mr. Cooper. In his note-book describing the university period of his career Labouchere wrote: "My father sent me to college, where, instead of improving my mind (for manners, I own, must be bad to be improved by such a place), I diligently attended the race-course at Newmarket. I had a general idea that here (at the university) I should astonish the world by my talents—I attended no lectures, as I considered myself too clever to undergo the drudgery. I considered myself—on what grounds God knows—an orator and a poet. I went to the Debating Society and commenced a speech in favour of the regicides, but, to my astonishment, entirely broke down. To my equal astonishment, upon writing the first line of a prize poem, I found it impossible to find a second. To become known in the university was my ambition—my short cuts to fame had failed—it never entered my head to apply myself really to study, so, in default of a better method, I resolved to distinguish myself by my bets on horse-races. I diligently attended every meeting at Newmarket and spent the evenings in a tavern, where the sporting students and sporting tradesmen assembled to gamble. At the end of two years I had lost about £6000, and I owed to most of my sporting friends. . . . Upon a dispute with the College authorities my degree was deferred for two years, and I left the University."

So many incorrect versions of Labouchere's dispute with the university have been given in various newspaper biographical notices at different times that a short account of what actually did happen will not be out of place here.

A court was held on April 2, 1852, at King's Lodge, to hear a complaint brought by the proproctor, Mr. Barnard Smith, against Henry Labouchere for having sent to various university officers a printed paper, signed by himself, imputing unfair conduct to Mr. Barnard Smith towards himself whilst in the Senate House during an examination.

What happened at the Senate House is best told in Labouchere's own words. I quote the printed letter which he sent to the university officers, and which was the cause of his leaving Cambridge before he took his degree.

The undersigned went into the Senate House for the previous Examination on Monday last, and had not been there long before he was painfully surprised by the suspicions of one of the proproctors, the Rev. Mr. Barnard Smith of St. Peter's College. This gentleman, from the beginning of the Examination, continued to watch the undersigned in so marked a manner as not only to be noticed by himself but by other members of the University, under examination, who sat near him. The undersigned felt much distressed at this special surveillance. He had done nothing to deserve suspicion of being likely to resort to any unworthy practices in the Senate House, and the knowledge that he was thus subject to what he felt to be little short of a direct personal insult hindered his giving undivided attention to the examination questions which he had to answer.

Notwithstanding this discouragement, the undersigned sent in his answers, which he has since been assured by one of the Examiners were satisfactory. . . .

On the day following (Tuesday), having nearly answered all the questions, the undersigned was stopped by the Rev. Mr. B. S. and charged with mal-practices in the Examination, of which he was not guilty.

HENRY LABOUCHERE.

After a short inquiry, during which it was ascertained

that Labouchere had been guilty of writing the above letter, the court delivered the following sentence: "The court being of opinion that the charge has been fully proved, and that the conduct of Mr. Labouchere has been highly reprehensible and injurious to the character and discipline of the University, sentences Henry Labouchere to be admonished and suspended from his degree for two years." In the course of the inquiry, Labouchere defended himself with great ability, though unsuccessfully.

I give his defence verbatim, as the detail with which he gave it is the best possible account of the circumstances which led up to his insubordinate act:

The whole business seems so indefinite that it is almost impossible to offer a defence. I am convened before the Vice-Chancellor for sending a printed notice to the Examiners and for bringing a charge against Mr. Barnard Smith. But what my copying or not copying in the Senate House has to do with it, it is difficult to say. But, as my copying has been brought forward and is supposed to bear on the subject, I am happy to have an opportunity of disproving it. Mr. Fenwick, on being asked, brought forward 3 charges why I was sent out of the Senate House: first, for having a paper concealed which I refused to give to the Examiners; secondly, for asserting that the paper had nothing to do with the Examination; and thirdly, for owning that it had. Mr. Fenwick (who it appears had the direction of the case) made no further charge. Mr. Barnard Smith now brings an entirely different charge, which is that I slipped a piece of paper into my pocket, and that he imagines he saw me do so. Why he didn't stop me at the time he does not say. Now all the Examiners who had been examined here to-day, except Mr. Latham, say that from my general conduct I was suspected of copying on Monday. Mr. Fenwick, however, is more particular, and says that my position excited suspicion. Mr. Woollaston says that I did not appear to be occupied with the Examination. So that what my general conduct was is explained. Having partly finished 10 questions in the Scripture history, I, more as a rest than anything else, wrote a note to a friend asking him how he

had got on, and mentioned that I had just given a long answer to the 10th question: I added, "I suppose the Shunamite woman was the person whose son was struck with the sun." While reading this note to myself, I saw Mr. Barnard Smith coming towards me; upon which I threw it away as far as possible; and upon his asserting that he had seen a paper in my hands I said that he had, but that I had no crib, nor had I in any way copied, that it was a note having nothing to do with the Examination. Not being in the habit of having my word questioned I saw no reason for producing it. Mr. Barnard Smith, however, thought differently; and, as the Examiners agreed with him, upon demanding its production I said that I had thrown it away, and it was probably somewhere on the ground. Having looked close by and not perceived it, I told Mr. Fenwick that I did n't see it. Mr. Fenwick, on this, ordered me to look for it, in a manner so offensive, that I took no further trouble about the matter. I then told the Examiners that, if they wished to know what was in the note, there was a question about the Shunamite woman, and told them I had just finished the answer to that question. I then gave up my papers and left the Senate House. The inference I believe drawn from the last two charges is that I told a lie. Upon this point any person may form his own opinion. I am asked whether I had a paper. The paper is by that time thrown away. I answered that I had. Had I denied it there would have been no evidence, and the matter would probably have dropped.

According to the Examiner I had first said the paper had nothing to do with the Examination, and then, finding that the paper is not produced, tell them that the paper had to do with the Examination. I simply stated what it contained and should not have told a lie against myself. The fact was, not seeing the paper, and considering that Mr. Fenwick had ordered me to look for it in rather an offensive way, I told them what it contained. I had finished the Examination question at the time, and the question in the note was not put in with any desire to know whether it was right or wrong. I simply put in that I supposed it was right more for something to say than for anything else. But I certainly did not consider it had anything to do with the Examination in the way which Mr. Barnard Smith meant.

With respect to Mr. Barnard Smith's impression that I slipped a piece of paper into my pocket, I wish that he had said so at the time, that I might have disproved it. I can only say now that there is a sufficient internal evidence in my answers to show that I did n't obtain assistance from any notes, as I had a general knowledge of the subject, and confined myself to general facts. After having been dismissed from the Senate House, and having, in vain, challenged an investigation before the Vice-Chancellor, as I understood the Examiners openly asserted that I had told a lie, I sent a circular to them denying the charge. I did this, lest at any time hereafter, such an action should be brought to my charge, and also that it had been unrefuted. I have now denied the charge, and for their individual opinion I care little.

The court asked, at this point, if Mr. Labouchere deliberately wished these words to be recorded: he said "Yes" and then went on with his defence:

But, as in their office of Examiners they had unjustly asserted that I told a lie, I did my duty in openly denying it. I mean to say that I sent this circular to the Examiners in their public capacity and not as private individuals. I sent it to justify myself from a charge which I consider unjust, and upon which I could not obtain an investigation.

The immediate reflection that presents itself to the mind of any one who knew Labouchere well and who studies his defence is that it is curious that it should have been over a Scripture History paper that he was suspected of cribbing, for, thanks to his early evangelical training and his innate love of his Bible, Labouchere was almost phenomenally proficient in Scripture knowledge. He quoted the Bible, and rarely incorrectly, on every occasion—in his parliamentary speeches, in his journalistic articles, and in private conversation—and he could, invariably, if questioned, give chapter and verse for the verification of his quotation.

Two anecdotes have frequently been given in the press about Labouchere's alleged cribbing at Cambridge. I never

heard him relate them himself, and they are probably legends of the kind that are born in the journalist's brain whilst he is racking it for copy in the shape of anecdotic detail. The first is that his academic career terminated abruptly because he had made a bet with another undergraduate that he would crib in his Little Go examination without being caught, and that when caught he accused the examiner of being in collusion with the other party to the bet. The other is that during the examination he was observed to be frequently looking at something concealed beneath a sheet of blotting-paper. On being asked to produce it, Labouchere refused. But, when obliged to do so, it was found that the concealed object was the photograph of a popular variety artiste, whose bright eyes, he asserted, stimulated him to persevere in his academic efforts.

There are, of course, any number of popular anecdotes of Labouchere's university days. A good one is the following. On one occasion, having taken French leave to London, he was unexpectedly confronted one morning in the Strand by his father, who looked extremely annoyed to see the youth there, when he imagined him to be occupied with his studies. Henry's wits as usual were on the alert. He returned his father's cold greeting with a surprised stare. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "I think you have made a mistake. I have not the honour of your acquaintance." He pushed by and was lost in the crowd. Rapidly consulting his watch, he found he could, by running, just catch a train for Cambridge. He did so, and what he had foreseen happened. Mr. Labouchere, senior, after having accomplished the business he was about, took the next train for Cambridge. On reaching the university he was ushered into his son's study, where he found him absorbed in work. He made no reference to his rencontre in the Strand, being persuaded that it must have been a hallucination.

Another story relates how he used to go about in a very ragged gown. One day the Master of Trinity, Whewell,

came across him and said, "Is that a proper academic costume, Mr. Labouchere?" "Really, sir, I must refer you to my tailor," was the reply.

Labouchere continues in his note-book to describe, with naïve minuteness of detail, his search for wisdom after he left the university. "With great liberality," he wrote, "my father paid my debts, and advised my return home. My family . . . was religious, and, finding my father's house dull, I had accustomed myself to live at a tavern in Covent Garden. . . . After remaining there for two or three weeks, I used to return home, and leave it indefinite from where I had come. Until my leaving College and the payment of my debts by my father, I had kept up an appearance of respectability at home. Now, however, I threw off all restraint, and openly lived at my tavern for about two months, during which I lost several hundred pounds at hells and casinos."

The tavern which Labouchere frequented at this period was far from being the haunt of vice which, with the gloomy sternness of moralising youth, he wished to depict it. It was a species of night club, known as Evans', and was the resort of all literary and artistic London. It constantly figures in Thackeray's novels and other books of the period as a place of Bohemian rendezvous and the scene of a good deal of rough-and-tumble jollity. The house, of which it formed the cellar, had once been the home of Sir Kenelm Digby. Above the tavern, or "Cave of Harmony" as Thackeray called it, was the hotel in which Labouchere had his rooms. In later years, that is to say in the later fifties and early sixties, the popularity of this place of conviviality increased so much that it was found necessary to pull down the little room where Labouchere used to listen every night to the singing of more or less rowdy songs, and build on its site a vast concert-room, with an annexe, consisting of a comfortable hall, hung with theatrical portraits, where conversation could be carried on. There was a private

supper-room in the grill, and this annexe became a popular resort for men about town. Some of the smartest talk in London was to be heard at Evans', for it numbered among its patrons such wits as Douglas Jerrold, Thackeray, Lionel Lawson, Edmund Yates, Augustus Sala, Serjeant Ballantine, John Leech, Serjeant Murphy—and Henry Labouchere. The presiding spirit of the establishment was a great friend of Labouchere's. He acted as head waiter and was known as Paddy Green. He had commenced his career as a chorus-singer at the Adelphi Theatre, and had won for himself in all classes of society an immense popularity on account of his courtesy and unfailing good-humour. The prosperity of Evans' only waned when the modern music-halls, where women formed the larger part of the audience, became the fashion.[1]

From the superior point of view of the maturity of twenty-one, Labouchere was inclined to survey, with an eye of undue severity, the follies he committed at the age of nineteen. He wrote: "Whenever I entered into conversation with any person, I introduced the subject of gambling, and boasted of sums I had lost, which I appeared to consider, instead of a disgrace, a subject on which I might justly pride myself. During this period I believe I had a general wish to elevate myself to some higher position, as, while passing my days and nights in profligacy, my chief study was Dr. Johnson's *Life* and Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*." And again: "Inflated with conceit I imagined myself equal to cope with all mankind. In society I was awkward, and therefore sought the society of my inferiors, while I endeavoured to delude myself with the notion that I was a species of socialist and that all men were equal. Conversation, properly so-called, I had none. I could argue any subject, but not converse—my manners were boorish—I had never learnt to dance, so I seldom entered a ball-room, or if

[1] Edmund Yates, *Recollections and Experiences;* Serjeant Ballantine, *Experiences of a Barrister's Life.*

there, I pretended to despise the amusement, as I never owned myself incapable of anything. If I entered a drawing-room, I either held myself aloof from the company, or I argued some subject by the hour with my neighbour. In fact, in manners I was an *outré* specimen of an uncultivated English young man—the most detestable yahoo in creation."

He continues: "From my tavern I was again rescued by my father, who sent me abroad under the guidance of a species of Mentor, who was, unfortunately, totally unfitted for his task. Three days after leaving England we arrived at Wiesbaden, where there are public gaming tables. Here I felt myself at home, and the first day gained about £150. My Mentor, who was going to the hotel, offered to carry the money I had won, and give it back to me the next day. The next morning, however, on my asking for it, he refused to return it unless I promised not to play while at Wiesbaden. After my father had so often paid large sums for me, in gratitude I ought to have yielded. This, however, I refused to do, but remained two months at Wiesbaden, while my Mentor continued his travels. At last it was agreed that I should meet him at Paris, and there receive my money, where, I need not add, in a few days it was spent."

Some of Mr. Labouchere's most interesting articles in *Truth* in after years were the ones he was in the habit of writing, when he was on his summer holiday, describing the various resorts he visited, and he was always eager to recall reminiscences of his boyhood when he found himself at a place he had passed through in his youth. He wrote from Wiesbaden in 1890:

> German watering-places are dull places now that the gambling at them has been abolished, and even those who did not play at their tables have discovered this. I am at Wiesbaden. When a jade repents of her ways and takes to propriety, she is little given to overdo respectability. So it is with this and other examples of roulette and *trente et quarante*. The respectability of the Wiesbaden of to-day is positively oppressive. Its devo-

tion weighs upon the spirit. I remember being here nearly forty years ago. I was then a lad travelling on the continent with a bear-leader to enlarge my experience. The bear-leader and I never could quite agree what spot would prove the most improving. He wished to study still nature, I wished to study human nature. So, like Abram and Lot, we generally separated. He betook himself to the Carpathian Mountains, I sojourned here. Wiesbaden was then cosmopolitan. The tag-rag and bobtail of all nations resorted to it, and, if all of them were not quite *sans reproche*, they were all pleasant enough in their way. There was a vague notion that, somewhere or other, there were waters, but, where precisely they were, and what they cured, very few knew. The Kursaal was the centre of attraction, with its roulette and its *trente et quarante*.[1]

From Paris, Labouchere and his tutor returned to England, and, after a month passed at Broome Hall with occasional visits to his beloved Evans', it was arranged that he should make a trip to South America, where his family had had for many years very important commercial interests and could give him some respectable introductions. He noted his impressions of his journey and arrival in America in the most approved early Victorian guide-book manner, but, in spite of an apparent effort to be, at the same time, both stilted and elegant in style, his natural originality peeps out here and there:

"On the 2nd of November, 1852, in the steam packet *Orinoco*, I set sail, or rather set steam, from England. For the first ten days I remained in bed in all the agonies of seasickness. Some persons, particularly poets, find some pleasure in a voyage, but I confess the *nil nisi pontus et aer* is to me the most distasteful sight in creation, especially when the *pontus* is rough. The passengers were chiefly Spaniards to Havana and Germans who were going to 'improve their prospects' –how I have no idea, but, from the appearance of the gentlemen, they might have done so with-

[1] *Truth*, Sept. 4, 1890.

out becoming millionaires. At nine we breakfasted, at twelve lunched, at four dined, and at seven tea'd. The rest of the day was passed on deck. Through storm and sunshine the majority of the foreigners played at bull, a species of marine quoits. The ladies always knitted, and the English read Dickens' *Household Words*. In the evening there was dancing. There was an unfortunate devil of a mulatto on board who offended the prejudices of the planters by dancing with the white ladies. 'Why,' they said, 'that fellow ought to be put up to auction unless anybody owns him.' In eating and these interesting diversions the day passed. The only incident that enlivened the voyage was, that one night the Germans had an immense bowl of punch brewed (I wish I had the recipe of that said punch, for a better brew I never tasted) and sang sentimental songs. One German went round and informed the English they were going to drink to *die* King of England, and, amid immense applause, they bawled out 'Gott save *die* Queen.' As the punch got to their heads the songs became more sentimental. A Bonn student seized the bowl, and wished to drink it to the Fatherland, when another, who saw no reason why the Bonn gentleman should consecrate the whole to his patriotism, knocked him down. This was the signal for a general row. Some were sick, some sang, while a little Jew, who, before, I had considered a steward, enlivened the scene by dancing about in his night-shirt. On coming up the next morning I found the Bonn student offering generally to fight a duel with any person who asserted he had misbehaved himself. As no one was valorous enough to do so, the student retired into 'bull.' At St. Thomas we changed steamers and almost died of heat. The mulatto turned out very smart, which excited the ire of one of the planters, who said, 'Look at that fellow with a new coat, he ought to be diving about naked for halfpence in the water.' Decency, however, forbade the mulatto taking the kindly meant advice. Ten days after leaving St. Thomas we arrived at Vera Cruz. I ought to

have felt some sort of enthusiasm on first seeing America, but a mosquito had stung me in the eye, so that I saw it under difficulties; indeed, a person must possess a large amount of enthusiasm to be aroused into any outward display by the sandbanks and plaguish-looking shore of Vera Cruz. I had a letter to a merchant, who most hospitably entertained me at his house, where I spent two days bathing my eye in hot water. On the third day, in company with some friends, we left for Mexico in the diligence. In a European town we should have created some excitement marching to the coach office, each armed with guns, swords, and revolvers *ad libitum*. Here, however, no one even stopped to look at our martial appearance. At the diligence office we had a preliminary taste of the pleasure of travelling in Mexico—travellers are only allowed 25 lbs. of luggage, and as every person's portmanteau weighed twice as much, the clerk refused to allow any to go. While my companions were haranguing inside I slipped my portmanteau, which was far the largest, under the coachman's seat, and a dollar into his hand. During the journey I was looked upon as a villain by my fellow-passengers, because each thought that, if I had not existed, their traps would have taken the place of mine. Their position was certainly uncomfortable—their sole luggage was in their hands, consisting chiefly, as it appeared to me, of tooth-brushes which they had taken out of their trunks. It was four in the evening when we started. For several leagues the carriage was pulled along a railway by mules. This comfortable method of travelling soon came to an end, and, with it, all signs of a road; we were jolted along a miserable path full of ruts, in part paved, or rather unpaved, by the Americans during their invasion, to make the road impassable. Little did they know the Mexicans, as this highroad from the chief seaport to the capital has never been repaired to the present time. Alison has given a glowing description of the beauties of the scenery between Vera Cruz and Mexico; it might have been Paradise, but, in that infernal

diligence, knocking my head every minute against the top, and holding on by both hands to the window, I was in no mood to enjoy the scenery. Fresh from Europe, I certainly was astonished at the luxuriant tropical jungle, filled with parrots and humming-birds instead of sparrows. While my eyes drank in this new scene, my nose drank in a succession of pole-cats. It is a journey of three days between Vera Cruz and Mexico. The first day and night is passed in a tropical heat, after which commences the ascent to the Grand Plateau of Mexico. A rose smells as sweet under another name, and, as it would be difficult to a European to pronounce the names, I do not much regret forgetting where we stopped the first night; the second was passed at Puebla di los Angelos, a town remarkable for its superstition during the rule of the Aztecs, and equally remarkable at present for its intolerance. When the cathedral was building, two angels came down every night and doubled the work done during the daytime by the mortal masons. The cathedral is the most beautiful in the country; every other house is a monastery and a church. At four we started again and jolted until three. Next morning, even under these difficulties, I could not help admiring the scenery. The only three snowy peaks in Mexico were all distinctly visible, while the road wound through mountains rising perpendicularly from the plain. One we passed is called after Cortes' wife, and exactly resembles in its outlines a giant asleep. At the close of the third day we reached Mexico.

"When the city was in the midst of a lake and approached by causeways it might have excited the admiration of Cortes and his army. In the midst of a dry swamp it failed to excite mine. The advance of Cortes from the shore to the capital was wonderful, but I really think it was to be preferred to the diligence and unpaved road. All sufferings have an end, and mine ended in the diligence hotel. I had imagined, from travellers' accounts, that I should be lucky if I got a corner in a barn with half a dozen mules, but I found myself sleeping

in a comfortable room and dining at a table d'hôte in a most distressingly civilised manner."

Labouchere does not think it necessary to his dignified narrative to mention the fact that his tutor accompanied him on this journey, but, upon a reference to his note-book, we find that the long-suffering Mentor formed one of the party. Labouchere is no less severe upon himself and his iniquities in America than he was in England. He wrote:

"We landed at Vera Cruz and proceeded to Mexico. In two months I lost all my money and £250 besides at cards. To induce my Mentor to pay this sum I retired to a neighbouring town and stated my intention to remain there until he provided the money. Here, in the *bena caliente*, in a small inn, with no companion but the innkeeper, I remained for a month. Here I reconsidered my life and determined to commence afresh. I asked myself upon what ground I rested my title to differ from the common race of fools. Was I clever? A scholar? I had read a little. On most subjects I was ignorant—in society I could argue, but not converse. With a lady, with a duenna, with every person in whose society I found myself, I introduced my sole subject—gambling. I told everybody that I had recently lost £6000, which I imagined raised me in their opinion. I could not dance, and I shunned society. I was conceited, and I was unwilling to confess my ignorance of anything. I was an abominable and useless liar, as I was fond of relating adventures of myself that had really never taken place. I was ready to make acquaintance with every person who spoke to me. Of music, drawing, and all the lighter arts I knew absolutely nothing. I was one thing and one alone—a gambler—on that subject I could be eloquent; but I felt that I could not consider myself superior to the generality of mankind on this ground alone. In playing even I failed, because, though I theoretically discovered systems by which I was likely to win, yet, in practice, I could command myself so little that upon a slight loss I left all to chance."

The last entry in his note-book was made by Labouchere in the seclusion of this little inn at Quotla di Amalpas, and it ends abruptly. Perhaps it was interrupted by the arrival of the Mentor, after his receipt of the letter, the draft of which is given further on.

"In my inn at Quotla di Amalpas I determined on reaching the States to entirely give up gambling. A gambler requires to possess the greatest command over himself, in which I entirely failed. To be very reserved—a reserved person is always supposed to be wiser than his neighbours. To be engaged in as many intrigues as is possible with ladies—nothing forms character so much as intrigues of this description—*probatum est.* To learn with a good countenance to pay delicate compliments and to. . . ."

In the flap of his note-book is the draft of the letter to his tutor, referred to above, which must be quoted, as it is so extremely characteristic of the man whose letters were ever, to the very end of his life, the most frankly illuminative documents as to the state of mind through which he might be passing. Incidentally, also, it cannot fail to suggest to the reader a gleam of compassion for the problems and trials which must have been the lot of its recipient. Here it is:

QUOTLA DI AMALPAS.

DEAR SIR,—I have just come back from Cuernava, where I rode over the worst road even in Mexico. Pray do not trouble yourself to exercise your forbearance, or make excuses, as I can assure you they are not wanted. If you find the slightest pleasure or amusement in writing to innkeepers not to give me money, write to every one in the country, but do not give yourself the trouble to tell me you have done so, as it is a matter of unimportance to me. My stopping in Mexico cannot now be helped, as I certainly shall not leave before getting some money, and I must then go to England to pay it. I had intended not to gamble in America, because of having to pay a double interest—but man proposes and God disposes. As R—— says, I made up a

story to avoid paying him. I could not at present leave my gambling debts unpaid, or he would be believed. I shall borrow some money here, and send to England (not to my father) for some to pay it, and then go to England to pay it when it becomes due. It is a pity having to go back as I should have liked to see a little more of America, but what is done is done, and cannot be helped.—Yours truly,

HENRY DU PRE LABOUCHERE.

P.S.—I have been offered a place as croupier at a Monté bank, so I shall not starve.

CHAPTER III

TRAVELS AND DIPLOMACY

(1853–1864)

WHETHER the Mentor resigned his job in despair about the time his pupil was making prudent resolutions in the seclusion of the little inn at Quotla di Amalpas, or whether it was decided by the parental authority that Labouchere might as well continue his search for wisdom in Mexico by himself, is not certain; but it would seem that, just about three months after his landing at Vera Cruz, he parted company with all his English friends, and, with a surprisingly small sum for such an adventure in his pocket, rode off, and wandered for eighteen months all over the country. Then he returned to the capital, and fell in love with a lady of the circus. The published legends belonging to this period of his career are legion. The authority for them appears to be almost always Mr. Joseph Hatton, who was the first writer to produce a biographical sketch of the editor of *Truth*. He wrote it for *Harper's Magazine*, where it formed part of a series which, in 1882, was published in England under the title of *Journalistic London*. According to Hatton, Labouchere gave him certain details of his past in an interview which took place at his house in Queen Anne's Gate, so that Hatton's evidence, in so far as *viva voce* reminiscences are reliable, is unimpeachable.[1]

[1] Joseph Hatton, *Journalistic London*.

Labouchere told him that he travelled with the troupe to which the lady he admired belonged, and got the job of door-keeper. The circus was a popular one, but the crowds who flocked to it were not all in a position to pay their entrance with hard cash, so that he was authorised by the proprietors to accept payment in kind—usually consisting of oranges or small measures of maize. A very similar story is related about him as occurring a year or two later when he was attaché at Washington, and is corroborated for me by Sir Audley Gosling, to whom Labouchere related it one day in his house in Old Palace Yard. Sir Audley noticed hanging on the wall a large playbill, and asked what it was.

"It's a funny story," replied Labouchere; "I will tell you about it. When attaché at Washington I was in the habit of attending almost nightly a circus, standing often at the artistes' entrance to the ring. The proprietor had often scowled at me, and one night asked me what I meant by trespassing on sacred ground. I told him I had formed an honourable attachment for one of his ladies, and simply stood in the passage to kiss the hem of her robe as she passed by. 'Get out of this, you d—d loafer,' he said. And I got out. A few months later I pointed out to my chief notices in the New York press of a certain American sparkling wine called, after the district where it was grown, 'Kitawber.' I told him I thought a report should be made on this new vintage, and volunteered to draw up a report for the Foreign Office. He seemed surprised by my assiduity and very unusual zeal (for I never did a stroke of work), and said: 'By all means go—that is a capital idea of yours.' The truth was my circus had removed to Kitawber and with it my fair lady of the *haute école*, so thither I proceeded. I presented myself to the proprietor, my rude friend, and told him I wished for an engagement with his troupe without salary. He asked me what my line was, and I told him standing jumps. Some obstacles were placed in the ring, over which I jumped with great success, and my name

figures on the playbill you see hanging there as the 'Bounding Buck of Babylon.' I wore pink tights, with a fillet round my head. My adorable one said I looked a dear."

It is more probable that these two stories are different versions of one and the same adventure than that he twice followed a travelling circus. No doubt, in recounting the tale, he confused the chronology.

It would appear that the well-known story of his six months' residence among the Chippeway Indians, usually related as an incident occurring in the off moments of his diplomatic career, really took place towards the end of 1853. Joseph Hatton, without mentioning any dates, relates it as follows: "By and by he tired of this occupation (*i. e.* travelling with the circus), and went to the United States. He found himself at St. Paul, which was then only a cluster of houses. Here he met a party of Chippeway Indians going back to their homes. He went with them and lived with them for six months, hunting buffalo, joining in their work and sports, playing cards for wampum necklaces, and living what to Joaquin Miller would have been a poem in so many stanzas, but which, to the more prosaic Englishman, was just seeing life and passing away the time." More than half a century later, when Mr. Labouchere was living at Pope's villa, he invited all the Indian chiefs and their families, who were at that time taking part in Buffalo Bill's Show called "The Wild West," to spend a Sunday with him at Twickenham. They accepted the invitation, and arrived betimes in the morning. Mrs. T. P. O'Connor, who was a visitor at the villa on the occasion, gives a graphic account of Mr. Labouchere's recognition, in the person of one of the Chippeways, of the son of one of the nomadic friends of his early youth. She goes on to tell the story of Mr. Labouchere's adventures with the Indians, as she had often heard him tell it.

Nearly sixty years ago, [she says], Henry Labouchere, then an adventurous lad, made a journey in the west of America.

Minneapolis was at that time called St. Anthony's Falls, and while he was there a far-seeing young chemist begged him to buy the land on which Minneapolis stands—it was to be sold for a very small sum, now it is worth many millions. He travelled still farther west with the Chippeways, who were going to their hunting fields. The great chief, Hole in Heaven, was very friendly with him, and he camped in one of their wigwams for six weeks, the sister of the chief being assigned to wait upon him. She cooked game to perfection, roasting wild birds in clay and larger game before a fire. The game in those days was very plentiful and tame, not having found out man to be their natural enemy. Sometimes prairie chickens came near enough to be knocked on the head, and great herds of buffalos still ranged the plains. The Indians often killed a buffalo, but Mr. Labouchere was not lucky enough to get one for himself. He saw an Indian war-dance, but discreetly, from a slit in the door of his wigwam, as Hole in Heaven said that, friendly as they were, at this sacred rite a white face might infuriate them even to the use of the tomahawk. Mr. Labouchere lingered among these American gentlemen until the last steamer had departed from Fond du Lac, so he was obliged to travel in a canoe until he reached the eastern end of the lake.[1]

After his experiences in the Wild West, Labouchere made New York his quarters for some time, and occupied himself with a careful study of the institutions, political and otherwise, of the American nation, for which he acquired at this period of his life a profound and lasting admiration. In 1883 he was writing to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain on the subject of Radical policy, and he said in the course of his letter: "I was caught young and sent to America; there I imbibed the political views of the country, so that my Radicalism is not a joke, but perfectly earnest. My opinions of most of the institutions of this country is that of Americans—that they are utterly absurd and ridiculous."[2] He constantly throughout his career drew upon his youthful reminiscences of

[1] Mrs. T. P. O'Connor, *I, Myself.*

[2] For the rest of this interesting letter see Chapter X.

America to point a moral or draw a comparison, almost invariably favourable to the transatlantic people. In a famous article which he wrote in 1884, to demonstrate to the public the wide divergency existing at that time between Whig and Radical principles, while discussing the financial relations of the Crown with the country, he said:

The President of the United States regards himself as generously treated with a salary of £10,000 per annum. We give half this sum to a nobleman who condescends to walk before the Chief of the State on ceremonial occasions with a coloured stick in his hand; and we spend more than five times this sum in keeping a yacht in commission and repair on which our sovereign steps two or three times in twenty years!

In the same article he compared the English system of education with the American:

If M * * * * wishes to learn what our schools ought to be, let him go to the State of Illinois. A child there enters school at the age of six. Each school is divided into ten grades; at the end of each year there is an examination, and a child goes up one or more grades according to his proficiency. A lad going through all the grades acquires an excellent liberal education; if he passes through the "high school" he is, by a very long degree, the educational superior of the majority of our youths who have spent years at Eton or at Harrow. All this does not cost his parents one cent. Rich and poor alike send their children to the public schools, and thus all class prejudice is early stamped out of the American breast. Another advantage of these schools is that boys and girls are taught together. The girls thus learn early how to take care of themselves, and the boys' manners are softened. When grown up, boys and girls are not kept apart as though they were each other's natural enemies, nor are there any ill effects from their associating together. If some marry, the relations of those who do not are those of brothers and sisters. The Duke of Wellington is reported to have said that Waterloo was won in the Eton playing fields. Not only was the Union maintained in many battlefields, but America has become the most forward nation

in the world owing to her schools. How pitiably small and narrow does our school system appear in comparison with theirs! Why cannot we do what has been done in America? Why? Because the land is too full of men . . . ignorant, servile, and aware that their only chance of succeeding in life is to perpetuate class distinctions, and to deprive the vast majority of their fellow-citizens of the possibility of competing with them by depriving them of the blessings of any real education. Which would be to the greater advantage of the country, a Church Establishment such as ours, or a school establishment such as that of Illinois? What Radical entertains a doubt? If so, why do not we at once substitute the one for the other?[1]

In his letters to the *Daily News* during the autumn and winter of 1870 and 1871, he wrote from Paris commenting on the behaviour of the English and American officials of the Diplomatic Corps who remained in Paris during the siege. "Diplomats," he wrote on September 28th, "are little better than old women when they have to act in an emergency. Were it not for Mr. Washburne, who was brought up in the rough-and-ready life of the Far West, instead of serving an apprenticeship in Courts and Government offices, those who are still here would be perfectly helpless. They come to him at all moments, and although he cannot speak French, for all practical purposes, he is worth more than all his colleagues put together." In another letter he gives an amusing picture of the worried English chargé d'affaires, immersed in official trivialities: "A singular remonstrance has been received at the British Embassy. In the Rue de Chaillot resides a celebrated English courtesan, called Cora Pearl, and above her house floats the English flag. The inhabitants of the street request the Ambassador of England, 'a country, the purity and decency of whose manners is well known,' to cause this bit of bunting, which is a scandal in their eyes, to be hauled down. I left Mr. Wodehouse consulting the text-writers upon international law, in order to discover a precedent for

[1] "Radical and Whigs," *Fortnightly Review*, Feb. 1, 1884.

the case." It contrasts sharply enough with the glimpse he gives his readers of the American Embassy. "I passed the afternoon," he wrote on November 15th, "greedily devouring the news at the American Legation. It was a curious sight—the Chancellerie was crowded with people engaged in the same occupation. There were several French journalists, opening their eyes very wide, under the impression that this would enable them to understand English. A Secretary of Legation was sitting at a table giving audiences to unnumbered ladies who wished to know how they could leave Paris; or, if this was impossible, how they could draw on their bankers in New York. Mr. Washburne walked about cheerily shaking every one by the hand, and telling them to make themselves at home. How different American diplomatists are to the prim old women who represent us abroad, with a staff of half a dozen dandies helping each other to do nothing, who have been taught to regard all who are not of the craft as their natural enemies." Yet another quotation from Labouchere's journalistic correspondence, illustrating his predilection for things American: "The ambulance which is considered the best is the American. The wounded are under canvas, the tents are not cold, and yet the ventilation is admirable. The American surgeons are far more skilful in the treatment of gunshot wounds than their French colleagues. Instead of amputation they practise resection of the bone. It is the dream of every French soldier, if he is wounded, to be taken to this ambulance. They seem to be under the impression that, even if their legs are shot off, the skill of the Esculapii of the United States will make them grow again. Be this as it may, a person might be worse off than stretched on a bed with a slight wound under the tents of the Far West. The French have a notion that, go where you may, to the top of a pyramid or to the top of Mont Blanc, you are sure to meet an Englishman reading a newspaper; in my experience of the world, the American girl is far more inevitable than the Britisher; and, of course, under the stars

and stripes which wave over the American tents, she is to be found, tending the sick, and, when there is nothing more to be got for them, patiently reading to them or playing at cards with them. I have a great weakness for the American girl; she always puts her heart in what she is about. When she flirts she does it conscientiously, and when she nurses a most uninviting-looking Zouave, or Franc-tireur, she does it equally conscientiously; besides, as a rule, she is pretty, a gift of nature which I am very far from undervaluing."

To resume our narrative. At home the parental and avuncular authorities had been at work, puzzling as to what career would best suit the young searcher for wisdom, the irrepressible Eton blood—the baby of the preparatory school, who, without his milk teeth, was able to confound the ruffians of the cane and their assistants—the undaunted enemy of university dons and pedagogues. Finally, it was decided that the diplomatic service would be, at any rate for a time, the best safety-valve for the inquisitive youth. Henry Labouchere was on one of his unconventional tours in his beloved Wild West when he heard of his first diplomatic appointment. He was appointed attaché at Washington on July 16, 1854.

Mr. Crampton had been Minister at Washington since 1852, and, at the time of Labouchere taking up his duties at the Legation, Lord Elgin, then Governor of Canada, was on a special mission to Washington. Mr. Crampton had not succeeded in making himself at all agreeable to the American statesmen, and during the Crimean War he had nearly caused a rupture between Great Britain and the United States over the question of recruiting. The exigencies of war had brought about the reprehensible practice of raising various foreign corps and pressing them—or crimping them—into the British service. Crampton very actively forwarded the schemes of his Government by encouraging the recruiting of soldiers within the territories of the United States. It was not, however, until 1856 that the President

of the United States came to a determination to discontinue official intercourse with him on account of the recruiting question. This necessitated his removal from Washington, and the feeling against him in the United States was so strong that diplomatic relations were not renewed with Great Britain for more than six months.[1] There is no evidence of any kind to support the statements that have appeared from time to time in the press, to the effect that Henry Labouchere was involved in the crimping business. During the time he spent at Washington he seems to have been an assiduous worker—to which the number of despatches in his handwriting preserved in the archives of the Record Office bear witness.

He related in *Truth*, some years later, how his energy received a check at the very outset of his career. "When I joined the diplomatic service," he said, "I was sent as attaché to a legation where a cynic was the minister. New brooms sweep clean. Every morning I appeared, eager to be employed, a sort of besom tied up in red tape. Said the cynic to me: 'If you fancy that you are likely to get on in the service by hard work, you will soon discover your error; far better will it be for you if you can prove that some relation of yours is the sixteenth cousin of the porter at the Foreign Office.' It was not long before I discovered that the cynic was right."

It was the fate of Henry Labouchere, wherever he went, to create an atmosphere of unconventionality, which formed a fitting background for the numberless stories which seem still to collect and grow round his name as time goes on. During one of Mr. Crampton's absences from the Legation, he had an opportunity of exercising the official reserve and

[1] It is interesting to note that Mr. Crampton's proceedings in America did not stand in his way, so far as promotion in the service was concerned. He was appointed Envoy-Extraordinary at Hanover almost immediately; Lord Palmerston insisted upon his being made a K.C.B., and he became Ambassador at St. Petersburg in 1858. (*Dictionary of National Biography.*)

discretion for which the English diplomats have always been so famous. An American citizen called one morning to see Mr. Crampton. "I want to see the boss," he said. "You can't—he is out," replied Labouchere. "But you can see me." "You are no good," replied the American. "I must see the boss. I 'll wait." "Very well," calmly said the attaché, and went on with his letter-writing. The visitor sat down and waited for a considerable time. At last he said: "I've been fooling round here two hours; has the chief come in yet?"—"No; you will see him drive up to the front door when he returns."—"How long do you reckon he will be before he comes?" "Well," said Labouchere, "he went to Canada yesterday; I should say he 'll be here in about six weeks."

In spite of all his good resolutions Labouchere was still a gambler, and once found himself in what might have been an awkward scrape owing to this propensity. All who knew him at all intimately must often have heard him tell the following episode, which I will relate as nearly as possible in his own words: "While I was attaché at Washington I was sent by the minister to look after some Irish patriots at Boston. I took up my residence at a small hotel, and wrote down an imaginary name in the hotel book as mine. In the evening I went to a gambling establishment, where I lost all the money I had with me except half a dollar. Then I went to bed, satisfied with my prowess. The next morning the bailiffs seized on the hotel for debt, and all the guests were requested to pay their bills and to take away their luggage. I could not pay mine, and so I could not take away my luggage. All that I could do was to write to Washington for a remittance, and to wait two days for its arrival. The first day I walked about, and spent my half dollar on food. It was summer, so I slept on a bench on the common, and in the morning went to the bay to wash myself. I felt independent of all the cares and troubles of civilisation. But I had nothing with which to buy myself a breakfast.

I grew hungry and, towards evening, more hungry still, so much so that I entered a restaurant and ordered dinner, without any clear idea how I was to pay for it, except by leaving my coat in pledge. In those days Boston restaurants were mostly in cellars, and there was a bar near the door, where the proprietor sat to receive payment. As I ate my dinner I observed that all the waiters, who were Irishmen, were continually staring at me, and evidently speaking of me to each other. A guilty conscience made me think that this was because I had an impecunious look, and that they were discussing whether my clothes would cover my bill. At last one of them approached me, and said: "I beg your pardon, sir; are you the patriot Meagher?" Now this patriot was a gentleman who had aided Smith O'Brien in his Irish rising, had been sent to Australia, and had escaped thence to the United States. It was my business to look after patriots, so I put my finger before my lips, and said: "Hush!" while I cast up my eyes to the ceiling as though I saw a vision of Erin beckoning to me. It was felt at once that I was Meagher. The choicest viands were placed before me, and most excellent wine. When I had done justice to all the good things I approached the bar and asked boldly for my bill. The proprietor, also an Irishman said: "From a man like you, who has suffered in the good cause, I can take no money; allow a brother patriot to shake you by the hand." I allowed him. I further allowed all the waiters to shake hands with me, and stalked forth with the stern, resolved, but somewhat condescendingly dismal air which I have seen assumed by patriots in exile. Again I slept on the common, again I washed in the bay. Then I went to the post office, found a letter for me from Washington with some money in it, and breakfasted."

Another anecdote Labouchere was fond of recalling about his Washington days was the following: Having planned a little holiday excursion, he found at the Chancellerie a letter awaiting him, addressed in the well-known handwriting of his

chief. Shrewdly suspecting that the instructions it contained would render his holiday impossible, he put the letter unopened in his coat-tail pocket, and carried out with great satisfaction to himself his holiday intentions. Then he opened his letter, and found that his suspicions of its contents had been very well founded. He wrote a nice letter of apology to his chief, beginning, "Your letter has followed me here," which was, after all, nothing but the simple truth!

"It is a funny thing," Labouchere would often say, speaking of treaties and diplomatic negotiations in general, "to notice on what small matters success or the reverse is dependent"; and he would then relate how, when he was attaché at Washington, he went down with the British Minister to a small inn at Virginia to meet Mr. Marcy, the Secretary of State for the United States, for the purpose of discussing a reciprocity treaty between Canada and the United States. Mr. Marcy, in general the most genial and agreeable of men, was as cross as a bear, and would agree to nothing. Labouchere asked the secretary to tell him, in confidence, what was the matter with his chief. The secretary replied: "He is not getting his rubber of whist." After that the British Minister proposed a rubber of whist every night, which he invariably lost. Mr. Marcy was immensely pleased at beating the Britishers at, what he called "their own game," and his good humour returned. "Every morning," Labouchere related, "when the details of the treaty were being discussed, we had our revenge, and scored a few points for Canada."

Labouchere was transferred to the Legation at Munich in December, 1855. "Old King Louis was then alive," he wrote thirty years later, "although he had been deposed for making a fool of himself over Lola Montes. I used frequently to meet him in the streets, when he always stopped me to ask how Queen Victoria was. I had at last respectfully to tell him that Her Majesty was not in the habit of writing to me every day respecting her health."

From Munich he went to Stockholm in 1857. I cannot resist quoting in full his account of the duel he fought while at Stockholm with the Austrian chargé d'affaires, it is so extremely characteristic of him both in spirit and style.

At Stockholm "I found favour with my superiors for the curious reason that I challenged an Austrian chargé d'affaires. Never was there a more absurd affair. There was an Englishman who had been challenged by a Swede, whom he declined to fight. A few days later the Englishman went with my Minister to a box in the theatre. The next day at a club the Austrian chargé d'affaires said before me and others that Englishmen had odd ideas of honour, and more particularly English Ministers. I replied that Englishmen were not so silly as to fight duels, and that the English Minister was not a dishonourable man for appearing in a theatre with his countrymen. As it was generally felt that I ought to challenge this Austrian, I 'put myself in the hands' of the French and Prussian Ministers. A few hours later my seconds came to me. I expected that they were going to tell me that the Austrian had apologised. Not at all. With a cheerful smile they observed: 'It is arranged for to-morrow morning—pistols.' At seven o'clock A.M. they reappeared. Their countenances were downcast. 'I have lost the mould for the bullets of my duelling pistols,' observed the Prussian, 'and we have had to borrow a pair of pistols, for whose accuracy of aim I cannot vouch.' This inwardly rejoiced me, but, of course, I pretended to share in the regret of my seconds. We sat down to an early breakfast. 'You are young, I am old,' said the Frenchman; 'would that I could take your place.' I wished it as sincerely as he did, but I tried to assume an air of rather liking my position, and I grinned a ghastly grin. Then we started for the park. The opposition had not arrived; but there was a surgeon, who had been kindly requested to attend by my sympathising friends. 'An accident may happen,' observed the Prussian; 'do you wish to confide to me any dispositions that you may

desire to be carried out after——?' and he sighed in a horribly suggestive manner. 'No,' I said; I had nothing particular to confide; and as I looked at the surgeon I thought what an idiot I was to make myself the target for an Austrian to aim at, in order to establish the principle that Englishmen have a perfect right to decline to fight duels. There was a want of logic about the entire proceeding that went to my heart. To be killed is bad enough, but to be killed paradoxically is still worse. Soon the Austrian and his seconds appeared. I never felt more dismal in my life. The Austrian stood apart; I stood apart. The surgeon already eyed me as a 'subject.' The seconds consulted; then the Frenchman stepped out twelve paces. He had very short legs, and they seemed to me shorter than ever. After this came the loading of the pistols. Sometimes, I thought, seconds do not put in the bullets; this comforted me, but only for a moment, for the bullets were rammed down with cheerful energy. By this time we had been placed facing each other. A pistol was given to each of us. 'I am to give the signal,' said the Prussian; 'I shall count one, two, three, and then at the word fire, you will both fire. Gentlemen, are you ready?' We both nodded. 'One, two, three, fire!' and both our pistols went off. No harm had been done. I felt considerably relieved when to my horror the Frenchman stepped up to me, and said: 'I think that I ought to demand a second shot for you, but mind, if nothing occurs again, I shall not allow a third shot.' 'Ye—es,' I said; so we had a second shot, with the same result. Knowing that my Frenchman was a man of his word, I felt now that I might at no risk to myself display my valour, so I demanded a third shot. The seconds consulted together; for a moment I feared that they were going to grant my request, and I was greatly relieved when they informed me that they considered that two shots were amply sufficient. I was delighted, but I pretended to be most unhappy, and religiously kept up the farce of being an aggrieved person."[1]

[1] *Truth*, May 23, 1878.

He was at Frankfort and St. Petersburg between November, 1858, and the summer of 1860. While he was at Frankfort he made the acquaintance of Bismarck, who was the Prussian representative at the restored Diet of Frankfort. Labouchere had a constitutional dislike of the German people, with the exception of the great Chancellor. He wrote some years later: "The only Prussian I ever knew who was an agreeable man was Bismarck. All others with whom I have been thrown—and I have lived for years in Germany—were proud as Scotchmen, cold as New Englanders, and touchy as only Prussians can be. I once had a friend among them. His name was Buckenbrock. I inadvertently called him Butterbrod. We have never spoken since!" Bismarck was an eminently social person, fond of drinking and smoking, and many a time did Labouchere listen to his jovial loud-toned talk in the cafés at Frankfort. "Bismarck," he wrote in later life, "used to pass entire nights drinking beer in a garden overlooking the Main. In the morning after a night passed in beer-drinking he would write his despatches, then issue forth on a white horse for a ride, and on his return, attend the Diet, of which he was a member."[1] It is interesting to note how very similar were the judgments of these two exceedingly different characters upon the subject of diplomacy and its aspects of absurdity and pomposity. Bismarck wrote from Frankfort: "Frankfort is hideously tiresome. The people here worry themselves about the merest rubbish, and these diplomatists with their pompous peddling already appear to me a good deal more ridiculous than a member of the second chamber in all the pride of his lofty station. Unless external accidents should accrue, . . . I know exactly how much we shall effect in one, two, or five years from the present time, and will engage to do it all myself within four-and-twenty hours, if the others will only be truthful and sensible throughout one single day. I never doubted that, one and all, these gentlemen prepared their

[1] *Truth*, Feb. 8, 1877.

dishes *à l'eau*, but such thin, mawkish water soup as this, devoid of the least symptom of richness, positively astounds me. Send me your village schoolmaster or road inspector, clean washed and combed; they will make just as good diplomatists as these."[1] Of diplomatic literature Bismarck observed: "For the most part it is nothing but paper and ink. If you wanted to utilise it for historical purposes, you could not get anything worth having out of it. I believe it is the rule to allow historians to consult the F. O. Archives at the expiration of thirty years (after date of despatches, etc.). They might be permitted to examine them much sooner, for the despatches and letters, when they contain any information at all, are quite unintelligible to those unacquainted with the persons and relations treated of in them."[2] Labouchere wrote in 1889: "If all Foreign Office telegrams were published, they would be curious reading. Years ago I was an attaché at Stockholm. The present Queen, then Duchess of Ostrogotha, had a baby, and a telegram came from the Foreign Office desiring that Her Majesty's congratulations should be offered, and that she should be informed how the mother and child were. The Minister was away, so off I went to the Palace to convey the message and to inquire about the health of the pair. A solemn gentleman received me. I informed him of my orders, and requested him to say what I was to reply. "Her Royal Highness," he replied, "is as well as can be expected, but His Royal Highness is suffering a little internally, and it is thought that this is due to the milk of the wet nurse having been slightly sour yesterday evening." I telegraphed this to the Foreign Office."[3]

In a speech he made in the House of Commons,[4] protesting against a sum of nearly £50,000 being voted for the salaries and expenses of the department for Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Labouchere said,

[1] Busch, *Our Chancellor*. [2] *Ibid*. [3] *Truth*, May 23, 1889.
[4] *Hansard*, July 14, 1884.

referring in particular to Foreign Office messengers, that very often these gentlemen were sent abroad, at a very large cost to the country, for no practical object whatever. They went on a certain route, and the business was made up for them as they went. He had had the honour to serve at one time under Sir Henry Bulwer at Constantinople. Now Sir Henry Bulwer was always ill; and on one occasion he remembered making a calculation that a box of pills Sir Henry was anxious to obtain, and which was sent out by a Foreign Office messenger, cost the country from £200 to £300. Probably the pills did Sir Henry good, and pills were much more useful than a good deal of the stuff sent out by the Foreign Office. He went on to tell the House that he had himself been in the diplomatic service for ten years, and he had spent a great deal of his time in ciphering and deciphering telegrams, and that he could not remember half a dozen of them that any man, woman, or child in the whole world would have taken any trouble to decipher for any information that could have been derived from them.

Labouchere used always to say that, while he was attaché at Frankfort, he spent most of his time at Wiesbaden, Homburg, or Baden, because he found the Diet of the German Confederation "rather a dull sort of affair." He managed, however, to make a great many very staunch friends at this period of his life. One of these was the old Duchess of Cambridge. He was a frequent visitor at the Schloss of Ruppenheim, which was the summer meeting-place of the main stock and branches of the Hesses. The old Duchess made a great fuss over him, for he could speak the German of Hanover so well that she could understand his banter and enjoy it. His popularity at Frankfort, according to his own account, rested on a very simple basis. Great Britain was represented at the Diet by Sir Alexander Malet, one of the most popular chiefs to be found in the Service. "But I was even more appreciated than my chief," he would relate, "and this is why. Sometimes there was a ball at the

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Court, which we were expected to attend. At my first ball supper I found myself next to a grandee, gorgeous in stars and ribbons. The servant came to pour out champagne. I shook my head, for I detest champagne. The grandee nudged me, and said, 'Let him pour it out.' This I did, and he explained to me that our host never gave his guests more than one glass, 'So you see, if I drink yours, I shall have two.' After this there used to be quite a struggle to sit near me at Court suppers."

Yet another ridiculous reminiscence of the Court of Darmstadt, dating from his attaché days at Frankfort. Sir Alexander Malet was fond of whist, and it was felt, said Labouchere, that an English diplomatist could not be expected to play the game for less than florin points. Such stakes, however, the fortune of no Darmstadt nobleman could stand. A sort of joint purse was therefore formed, which was entrusted to the three best players of the grand-ducal Court, and these champions encountered the Englishman. "It was amusing," Labouchere would relate, "to watch the anxiety depicted on all countenances: when the Minister won all was gloom; when he lost, counts and countesses, barons and baronesses, skipped about in high glee, like the hills of the Psalmist."

Bismarck was Ambassador at St. Petersburg during the year that Labouchere was there as attaché in 1860, so it is very probable that he continued to imbibe wisdom from listening to the conversation of the great German, for whose powers of statecraft he always expressed the warmest admiration. The following amusing episode occurred during his year at St. Petersburg. He was in love with the wife of one of the gentlemen about the Court. So was a tall, smart young Frenchman. Labouchere was desperately jealous of his rival, but could think of no means of outwitting him. At a Court function they were both standing near the object of their admiration, the Frenchman making, it seemed to Labouchere, marked advances in the lady's favour. How-

ever he was soon called away for some reason or another. Labouchere, in his eagerness to seize the opportunity and advance his own suit, inadvertently tipped his cup of black coffee over the lady's magnificent yellow satin train. He was in despair, but, seeing that she had not yet perceived the tragedy, he slipped the cup and saucer into his tail-coat pocket, and then, with an air of commiseration, drew her attention to the ruined gown. "Who did it?" she exclaimed furiously. Labouchere put his finger to his lips, at the same time looking significantly at the form of his rival, at that moment disappearing through the doorway. "I *know* who did it," he said, "but wild horses would not induce me to tell you." Of course, the lady had followed the direction of his glance. She exclaimed: "That ruffian, I will never speak to him again as long as I live!" History does not relate how the adventure proceeded for the handsome Frenchman's rival.

Labouchere did not think much of the Russians. He used to say that they were like monkeys, eager to copy the manners of civilised Europe, but that the copy they succeeded in producing was a daub and not a picture, because they always exaggerated their originals. When they were polite, they were too polite; when they were copying Frenchmen, they were too much like dancing masters; and when they were copying Englishmen they were too much like grooms. He had an amusing account to give of a visit he once paid to a Russian country house. "Card-playing, eating and drinking—and more especially the latter," he related—"went on all day and nearly all night. I never could understand where my bedroom was, for the excellent reason, as I at length discovered, that I had n't one. At a late hour I saw several of the guests heaping up in corners cushions which they had taken from sofas, to serve as beds, so I followed their example. When I woke up in the morning I could not see any apparatus to wash in, so I filled a china bowl with water, and, having dried myself with a table-cloth which I found in an adjoining room, I dressed." He

gave a charming thumb-nail sketch of a Russian drawing-room, à propos of a visit of Mr. Augustus Lumley to the Russian capital. Mr. Lumley was a famous cotillon leader. "I was at St. Petersburg when Mr. Lumley arrived on a visit. He was solemnly introduced to the Russian leader of cotillons, who is invariably an officer of distinction, as a colleague. It was like the meeting between two famous generals, and reminded me of the pictures of Wellington and Blücher on the field of Waterloo. It took place at a ball, and the Russian, with chivalrous courtesy, offered to surrender to his English colleague the direction of the cotillon."

The Emperor of Russia[1] once stood beside Henry Labouchere whilst he was playing at écarté to watch his game. The occasion was a ball given by the Empress to the Emperor on his birthday. Labouchere and his adversary were both at four, and it was Labouchere's deal. "Now," said the Emperor, "let us see whether you can turn up the king." Labouchere dealt, and then held out the turn-up card, observing: "Your orders have been obeyed, sir." The Emperor asked him, as often as a dozen times subsequently, how he had managed it, and never could be persuaded that it was a mere coincidence, and that the young attaché had taken the chance of the card being a king. It was a trifling example of the luck, or its reverse, that seemed to be for ever crossing and recrossing Labouchere's path, in spite of his own belief in nothing but the logical sequence of events.

A popular anecdote of his Petersburg days is the following: A fussy German nobleman pushed his way into the Chancellerie, where Labouchere was working, asking to see the Ambassador. "Please take a chair," said the secretary; "he will be here soon." "But, young man," blustered the German, "do you know who I am?" And he poured out a string of imposing titles. Labouchere looked up in well-simulated awe. "Pray take two chairs," he remarked quietly, and went on writing.

[1] Alexander II.

When Khalil Pasha was recalled from being Ambassador in Paris, Labouchere published the following reminiscence of his year in the Russian capital: "Khalil Pasha once saved me from a heavy loss, and that is why I take an interest in him. He, a Russian, and I sat down one evening to have a quiet rubber. The Russians have a hideous device of playing with what they call a zero; that is to say, a zero is added to all winnings and losses, so that 10 stands for 100, etc. When Khalil and the Russians had won their dummies, I found to my horror that, with the zero, I had lost about £4000. Then it came to my turn to take dummy. I had won a game, and we were playing for the odd trick in the last game. If I failed to win it I should lose about £8000. Only two cards remained in hand. I had marked up six tricks and my opponents five. Khalil had the lead; he had the best trump and a thirteenth card. The only other trump was in the hands of the dummy. He had, therefore, only to play his trump and then the thirteenth card to win the rubber, when he let drop the latter card, for his fingers were of a very 'thumby' description. Before he could take it up I pushed the dummy's trump on it and claimed the trick. The Russian howled, Khalil howled; they said this was very sharp practice. I replied that whist is essentially a game of sharp practice, and that I was acting in accordance with the rules. The lookers-on were appealed to, and, of course, gave it in my favour. Thus did I make, or rather save, £8000 against Russia and Turkey in alliance, through the fault of the Turk; and it seems to me that the poor Ottoman, now that he is at war (1877) with his ally of the card-table, is losing the game, much as Khalil lost his game of whist to me. To have good cards is one thing, to know how to make use of them quite another."[1]

Labouchere used to tell a good story of how he got at the secrets of the Russian Government. His laundress was a handsome woman, and having made friends with her on

[1] *Truth*, July 16, 1877.

other than professional grounds, she happened to mention that her husband was a compositor in the government printing office. The minutes of the Cabinet councils were printed in French, of which the printers, of course, understood nothing. Labouchere persuaded her, for a consideration, to obtain from her husband the loose sheets from which the minutes had been printed. They were brought to him by the faithful woman every week, concealed among his starched shirts and collars. As soon as Lord John Russell discovered the source of the interesting information that reached him from Petersburg, he put a stop to the simple intrigue. Labouchere would always wind up his narrative of this episode with the words: "For what reason, I wonder, did Russell imagine diplomacy was invented?"

After Petersburg, Dresden was Labouchere's next appointment. He had previously assiduously studied the German language, in which, being a born linguist, he was remarkably proficient. He had been for a time to Marburg to reside in a German family for the purpose of acquiring conversational fluency. All through his life one of his fads consisted in working out on how small an income an economical family might live in comfort, and he used frequently to commend the management of means practised in the bourgeois family at Marburg where he boarded. It consisted of a mother, two daughters, a father, and an elementary maid-of-all-work. The daughters did the housework alternately. The daughter, whose turn it was to be the young lady, used to dress herself gorgeously every afternoon and evening, receiving visitors or paying calls. She would play Chopin and Beethoven on the pianoforte, and make herself an exceedingly agreeable social personage. The following week she would retire to the domestic regions and be an excellent servant, while her sister took her turn as *femme du monde*. Occasionally the whole family, including Labouchere, would be invited to a party. It was the custom on such occasions for both the daughters to be "young

ladies." The maid-of-all-work would accompany them to the neighbour's house whither they had been bidden, carrying their suppers in paper bags—for the hospitality proffered at Marburg was intellectual, not material. All the guests brought similar paper bags, and at the conclusion of the repast the remains of the various meals were carefully collected by their respective owners, and carried home to figure at the next day's *mittagessen*. Labouchere used often to assert that the evening parties at Marburg were the most delightful and amusing ones he ever attended. While there he frequented the hospital, and attended the lectures given for the instruction of the medical students. He was always fond of developing extraordinary theories on the subject of medical science, more remarkable for their originality than for their probable ultimate utility. The authority upon which these theories would be based was invariably that of the lecturer at the Marburg Hospital. Even as late as 1905, Mr. Labouchere still remembered his medical student days. He wrote to one of his sisters in that year on the occasion of her son becoming a doctor: "A doctor is a good profession. I learnt doctoring at Marburg in order to learn German. I rather liked it, and have vainly offered to doctor people gratis since then, but no one seems inclined."

Between his diplomatic appointments at Frankfort and Petersburg, Labouchere spent several months at Florence, and he described in *Truth* how it was that he came to have a year's free time on his hands: "Once did I get the better of the Foreign Office. I was on leave in Italy when I received a notification that Her Majesty had kindly thought fit to appoint me Secretary of Legation to the Republic of Parana. I had never heard of this republic. After diligent inquiry, I learnt that Parana was a sort of Federal town on the River Plate, but that a few months previously the republic of that name had shared the fate of the Kilkenny cats. So I remained in Italy, and comfortably drew my salary like a bishop of a see *in partibus infidelium*. A year later came a

despatch couched in language more remarkable for its strength than its civility, asking me what I meant by not proceeding to my post. I replied that I had passed the twelve months in making diligent inquiries respecting the whereabouts of the Republic of Parana, hitherto without success, but if his lordship would kindly inform me where it was, I need hardly say that I would hasten there!"[1]

While in Florence Labouchere witnessed the revolution which deposed the Grand Duke and provided Tuscany with a provisional government of her own choice, preparatory to the union of all the Italian States under the King of Sardinia. He was a personal friend of Mr. (afterwards Sir) James Hudson, the English Minister at Turin, whose Nationalist sympathies, like Labouchere's, were well known, and he was an invaluable reporter to the Liberals in Turin of the news of the struggle for liberty in Tuscany. On the morning of the revolution, after the Grand Duke and his family had left the Pitti Palace, he, with many of his revolutionary friends, entered the forsaken home of Austrian royalty, and had the astuteness to procure on the spot what was left of the famous Metternich Johannisberger for the newly founded *Unione* Club, of which he was a member. He had an amusing story to tell about the flight of the grand-ducal family from the City of Flowers, which is best repeated in his own words, as he used to relate it to his Florentine friends after he had returned to end his days in the place which he had loved so well in his youth. "The news was brought back here by some of the people who had seen them off the premises, that, on the road to Bologna, they all got out and stopped an hour or two at an inn, where they all sat in a row crying. After this had gone on for some time, it was discovered that the whole party had forgotten their pocket-handkerchiefs. Fortunately the Grand Duchess had on a white petticoat with very ample frills, so she went round to each of the grand-ducal family in turn, and wiped their

[1] *Truth*, May 23, 1878.

eyes and noses for them in the frills of her petticoat. And then she did the same for the ladies and gentlemen in waiting."

"Do I think that incident really is true?" he would reply to his incredulous audience, "probably not. But from what I know of royalties in general, and from what I remember about the grand-ducal family of Tuscany in particular, I think that it is exceedingly probable that they would start out on an expedition of that kind without a pocket-handkerchief between them."[1] His personal reminiscences of Victor Emmanuel II. and of Cavour were of the raciest description and would enthral his hearers by the hour, told as only he could tell them, with all the decorative touches of local colour and local dialect.

He was also very fond of telling a story about an outrageous compliment he paid to a lady belonging to the Court of the Grand Duchess, which, if true, showed that at least one of the resolutions he had made in the inn at Quotla di Amalpas had been carried into successful practice: "The Grand Duchess of Tuscany had a venerable maid of honour above seventy years of age. She had piercing black eyes, and looked like an old postchaise, painted up and with new lamps. 'How old do you think I am?' she once asked me, with a simpering smile that caused my blood to run cold. I hesitated, and then said 'Twenty.' 'Flatterer,' she replied, tapping me with her fan, 'I am twenty-five.'

Having become third secretary in November, 1862, Labouchere was appointed to Constantinople. He wrote in *Truth* nearly thirty years later: "I was once Secretary of Embassy at Constantinople and I passed my time reading up Lord Stratford's despatches before and during the Crimean War. No one could have recognised them as the originals from which Mr. Kinglake drew his material for a narrative of the Ambassador's diplomatic action. The fact was that Lord Stratford was one of the most detestable of the human race.

[1] *Florence Herald*, Dec. 28, 1909.

He was arrogant, resentful, and spiteful. He hated the Emperor Nicholas because he had declined to receive him as Ambassador to Russia, and the Crimean War was his revenge. In every way he endeavoured to envenom the quarrel and to make war certain. His power at Constantinople was enormous. This was because, whilst the Ambassadors of other Powers changed, his stay there seemed eternal. A Grand Vizier, or a Minister of Foreign Affairs, knew that, if he offended the English Ambassador, he would never cease plotting to drive him out, and to keep him out of power. He therefore thought it better to keep on good terms with him and to submit to his arrogance. But Lord Stratford never used his power for good. It was enough for him to get the Sultan to publish a decree. This he would send home as evidence of good government. He never, however, explained that the decree, when published, remained a dead letter. When Sir Henry Bulwer (Lord Dalling) was sent as Commissioner to the Principalities, he passed a considerable time (as indeed was necessary) at Constantinople. Lord Stratford knew that Sir Henry wanted to replace him, and he feared that he would succeed in doing so. His rage and indignation were therefore unbounded. One day the Ambassador and the Commissioner were together at the Embassy. 'I know,' said the Ambassador, 'that you are trying to get my place,' and he shook his fist in the face of Sir Henry, who mildly surveyed him and shrugged his shoulders."

Sir Horace Rumbold writes charmingly of Henry Labouchere at Constantinople in 1863. "In August," he says, "the torrid heat drove me to seek for a while the cool breezes of the Bosphorus, and I then, for the first time, became acquainted with the wonders of Constantinople. Here I found at the Embassy Edward Herbert and got to know that remarkable, *original*, and most talented and kind-hearted of would-be cynics, Henry Labouchere."[1] Later on, in the same volume of reminiscences, he gives another picture of

[1] Rumbold, *Recollections of a Diplomatist*, vol. ii.

the young secretary, whose diplomatic career was, however, soon to come to a close. "The Pisani dynasty were still masters of the situation when I arrived. Under the, in many ways, unfortunate tenure of the Embassy by Sir Henry Bulwer, Alexander Pisani, best known as the 'Count,' who was simply the Keeper of the Archives, had been made head of the Diplomatic Chancellerie of the Embassy, to the intense disgust of successive secretaries properly belonging to the Service. Pisani, it was said, had extorted this abnormal appointment from his chief by threatening to resign and write his memoirs. Henry Labouchere, among others, greatly resented the arrangement. Some years before, he had a passage of arms with the 'Count,' who had reproved him, so to speak, officially for absenting himself for the day from the Chancery on some occasion, without applying to him for leave to do so. The ridiculous affair was referred to Sir Henry Bulwer, and gave my friend Labby a charming opportunity of describing the 'Count' in a formal letter to the Ambassador. 'It seems to me,' he wrote, 'a singular dispensation that places a Greek nobleman of Venetian extraction, who profited by the advantages of a Pera education, in authority over a body of English Gentlemen.'"

Mr. Labouchere was always very amusing on the subject of his chief at Constantinople. He said that Lord Dalling could not understand the value of money. He was so generous that he was always in financial difficulties. At one time the Embassy was reduced to such straits that there was no money to buy any decent wine. The difficulty was met in the following manner: At official dinners the grand-looking *maître d'hôtel* would solemnly say before pouring out the wine, "Château Lafitte '48," or "La Rose '52," and so on, all through dinner. As a matter of fact, the wine had really come from the neighbouring Greek isles, and had been doctored with an infusion of prunes to tone down the flavour of tar, which is inseparable from these insular vintages. Lord Dalling himself was so anxious to please that he would

quaff glass after glass of the horrible beverage, swallowing numberless pills the while as an antidote.

There are many versions of the incident with which Labouchere chose to conclude his relations with the Diplomatic Service. The Foreign Office records of the date are not yet available, but I am indebted to Sir Audley Gosling for his recollections of the affair as it happened. In the summer of 1864, Labouchere found himself at Baden-Baden, enjoying the relaxation of a little gambling after his strenuous work in the service of his country. While there he received from Lord Russell, the Foreign Secretary, the usual stereotyped announcement of his promotion in the Diplomatic Service. It ran: "I have to inform you that Her Majesty has, on my recommendation, been pleased to promote you to be a Second Secretary in the Diplomatic Service to reside at Buenos Ayres."

Labouchere is said to have replied as follows: "I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch, informing me of my promotion as Second Secretary to Her Majesty's Legation at Buenos Ayres. I beg to state that, if residing at Baden-Baden I can fulfil those duties, I shall be pleased to accept the appointment." As this was the second joke he had played on Lord Russell, he was politely told that there was no further use for his services.[1]

A successful "system" is not an essential part of the educational equipment of a diplomat, but it may on occasion be a very useful extra to his other accomplishments. Mr Labouchere found it so. "I used at one time," he said, "to take the waters every year at Homburg, and I invariably paid the expenses of my trip out of my winnings at the gambling-tables. It may have been luck, or it may have been system; but I give my system for what it is worth. I

[1] The letter, signed by Lord Russell, appointing Henry Labouchere Second Secretary is dated February 3, 1863, so that the one, referred to by Sir Audley Gosling, appointing him to Buenos Ayres, must have been of later date. The latter is not in my possession.

used to write the following figures on a piece of paper: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. My stake was always the top and bottom figure added together. If I won, I scratched out these figures; if I lost, I wrote down the stake at the bottom of the figures, and I went on playing until all the figures on my piece of paper were erased. Thus my first stake (and I played indifferently on red or black) would be ten. If I won it, I scratched out three and seven. My next stake would be ten again, as four and six make ten. If I lost it, I wrote down ten at the bottom of my list of figures, and played fourteen, being the addition of the first and last figure on the list, viz. fourteen. The basis of the 'system' was this. Before reaching the maximum, I could play a series of even chances for about two hours, and if during these two hours I won one quarter as many times as the bank, plus five, all my figures were erased. During these two hours an even chance would be produced two hundred times. If, therefore, I won fifty-five times, and the bank won one hundred and forty-five times, I was the winner of twenty-five napoleons, florins, or whatever was my unit. Now let any one produce an even chance by tossing up a coin and always crying 'heads,' he will find that he may go on until Doomsday before the 'tails' exceed the 'heads,' or the 'heads' exceed the 'tails,' by ninety-five. I found this system in a letter from Condorcet to a friend, which I read in a book that I purchased at a stall on the 'Quai' at Paris. It may have been, as I have said, only luck; but all I can say is, that whenever I played it I invariably won."

One of Mr. Labouchere's oldest friends, Mrs. Crawford, recently wrote to me a letter in which she made the following lucid remarks about his career in the Diplomatic Service: "I was acquainted," she says, "with many of his diplomatic comrades, and they often spoke of him in chat with me. Some were friendly, some were not. He had a very unguarded tongue, and discharged his shafts of satire, irony, humour in all directions, and every arrow that hit made an

enemy. I, mentally, used to take this into account in judging of their judgments, and the habit, which does not exist in England, of searching for mitigating circumstances helped me to make a fair and true estimate of his complex nature. I think he rather enjoyed, but *passagèrement*, being thought a Richard III., an Iago—an inveterate gambler. I soon came to the conclusion that this was partly due to a reaction against the idolatrous attitude of the English middle class and religious people towards Victoria and Albert, for it was shockingly fulsome—and the Queen early showed hostility towards him. His uncle, Lord Taunton, reflected her known sentiments, and so did Lord Clarendon. He was wrong, very wrong, to have treated the vile crime of Grenville Murray, and committed too in an Office capacity, as a thing of no consequence and the stumble made by an exceedingly clever man—a too great rarity in the British Consular Service. I have some recollection that she was furious with the Prince of Wales, who had not the virtue, in his early years at any rate, of reticence in speaking, for, on the authority of Mr. Labouchere, taking Grenville Murray's part against the Foreign Office in her presence. This, however, was only one of the reasons of her fixed hostility. . . ."

The crime to which Mrs. Crawford refers as having been committed by Grenville Murray in an official capacity was that of forwarding private news to the *Morning Post* (to which paper he was secretly acting as correspondent) in the Foreign Office bag from Vienna, where he was an attaché in 1852, under Lord Westmorland. Mr. Labouchere declared in *Truth* that Lord Palmerston, having a private grudge against Prince Schwarzenberg, the Prime Minister of Austria, and wishing for special information about him to reach the British public, had come to a private understanding with Grenville Murray that his journalistic correspondence would be winked at. Unfortunately the "copy" fell into the hands of Lord Westmorland, who demanded from Lord

Palmerston the instant dismissal of Murray. Murray was not dismissed, but in a year's time was transferred to Constantinople, where Lord Stratford de Redcliffe reigned supreme. He had, of course, heard from Lord Westmorland about Murray's journalistic indiscretions, and hated him accordingly. Murray retorted by holding up his chief to every sort of ridicule to the English magazine-reading public; for he was a clever writer, and contributed largely to *Household Words*, then under the editorship of Charles Dickens. The Foreign Office soon thought it necessary to remove him, and he was appointed to the consul-generalship of Odessa. At Odessa the consul was just as unpopular as the attaché had been at Vienna and Constantinople. The defence of Grenville Murray, to which Mrs. Crawford refers, was probably founded upon facts contained in the following passage of an "Anecdotal Photograph" of Lord Derby, published by Mr. Labouchere in an early number of *Truth:*

When Lord Derby was at the head of the Foreign Office, he left all the appointments in the Diplomatic Service to the permanent officials, and, owing to this pococurantism, he did an act of injustice to one of the most brilliant *littérateurs* of the day. The gentleman in question had a consulship in the East. An able and brilliant man, he was naturally a *persona ingrata* to the high priests of red tape, and between them and him there was perpetual war, which at length culminated in a determination to remove him *per fas* or *per nefas* from the service. Certain charges were accordingly brought against this gentleman, who was put on his defence. The accused, who was then in London, applied for copies of certain papers from the archives of the Foreign Office which he considered essential to his complete exculpation. The officials at first declined to grant them, but, after a long correspondence, admitted the justice of the claim. The papers were sent accordingly, together with two separate letters, both bearing the same date. One announced that the documents had been forwarded, the other that Lord Derby had made up his mind on the whole case, and his decision was in these words: "I have accordingly advised the Queen to cancel your

commission as——, and it is hereby cancelled accordingly." The recipient of this interesting epistle was at first inclined to treat it as a bad joke, but soon found that it was an authentic fact.[1]

I have the great good fortune also to have received from Mr. Wilfrid Blunt a brief memoir of Mr. Labouchere, which commences in his early diplomatic days, and though it carries us on almost to the end of his life, I think that its publication here will enable those readers who did not know Mr. Labouchere personally to get a sincere impression of the whole of his career, which cannot fail to be of assistance to them in elucidating his curious original personality from the maze of dates and details which are the inevitable appendages of a comprehensive biography. Mr. Blunt writes as follows:

Feb. 13, 1913.

My acquaintance with Henry Labouchere dates, if I remember rightly, from the early spring of 1861. We were both then in the Diplomatic Service, and though not actually employed together, I had just succeeded him as unpaid attaché at the Frankfort Legation, and found him still lingering there when I came to take up my not very onerous duties that year under our chief, Sir Alexander Malet, Edward Malet's father. Labouchere's attraction to Frankfort was not Frankfort itself, but its close neighbourhood to Hombourg, where the gambling-tables still flourished, and where he spent nearly all his time. By rights he ought to have been at St. Petersburg, but pretended that he could not afford to travel to his new post except on foot, and so was staying on waiting to have his expenses paid by Government. His life at that time was an avowedly disreputable one, the society of Hombourg being what it was; and he was looked upon by the more strait-laced ladies of the Corps Diplomatique as something of a pariah. There was a good deal of talk about him, opinions being divided as to whether he was more knave or fool, greenhorn or knowing fellow, all which amused him greatly. He was in reality the good-hearted

[1] *Truth*, Nov. 20, 1879.

cynic the world has since acknowledged him to be, with a keen appreciation of the *comédie humaine*, a contempt for aristocratic shams, and a philosopher's taste for low society.

I have a coloured caricature I made of him of that date, 1861, in which he is represented as undergoing a conversion to respectability at the hands of Countess d'Usedom, the Olympia of the Bismarck memoirs, and wife of the Prussian Ambassador, with her two Scotch nieces in the preposterous crinoline dresses of the time. He figures in it as a round-faced young man with highly coloured cheeks, and an air of mock modesty which is very characteristic. It is labelled "The Deformed Transformed."

Later, I used to see him pretty frequently in London at the St. James' Club, of which we were both members. He was already beginning to be a recognised wit, and a central figure among talkers in the smoking-room. But I remember old Paddy Green of Evans' still maintaining that he was for all that a simple-minded fellow, made to be the prey of rogues. It was as such that he had known him some years before when Labouchere first appeared in London life and took up his quarters at Evans' Hotel in Covent Garden. The good Irishman had dolorous stories of the way in which his protégé had then been fleeced. "Poor Labouchere, poor Labouchere," he used to say, in his paternally emotional voice; "a good young man, but always his own worst enemy." His own worst enemy he certainly often was. I remember his coming into the Club one evening, it must have been in 1865, when he had just been elected M.P. for Windsor, and boasting to all of us who would listen to him, with every detail, how he had bribed the free and intelligent electors of the Royal Borough, an imprudence which caused him the misfortune of his being unseated immediately afterwards on petition.

Of the years that followed, when he was making his name as a journalist, and his fortune on the Stock Exchange, I have nothing particular to record. I came once more into close connection with him in 1882, at the time of the trial of Arabi at Cairo after Tel-el-Kebir. Labouchere, during the early months of the year, had been among those Radicals who in the House of Commons had followed Chamberlain and Dilke in pressing intervention in Egypt on the Foreign Office, and he made no

secret of the reason—he was a holder of Egyptian Bonds. The bombardment of Alexandria and the massacre of Tel-el-Kebir, with the revelations which followed of the intrigues which had caused the war, proved, however, too much for his political conscience, which was really sound, and having unloaded his Egyptian stock, which had gone up to higher prices (for he was not a man to neglect a Stock Exchange opportunity), he frankly repented of his sin, and from that time onwards did his best to repair the wrong to Egypt he had joined in doing. He subscribed handsomely to the "Arabi Defence Fund," was always ready to ask questions in the House, and did not scruple to reproach the Grand Old Man with his lapses at Cairo and in the Soudan from his Midlothian principles. In this connection I saw much of him from 1883 to 1885, years during which Egypt occupied so large a share of public attention, and always found him interested in the Egyptian cause and helpful.

He was living then in Queen Anne's Gate, and I was pretty sure to find him in the morning, and often stayed to lunch with him and his wife. He was uniformly gay and pleasant and ready to give news. No one ever was more generous in sharing his political knowledge with his friends, and I could count on him to tell me the true and exact truth of what was going on in the directions that interested me, without regard to the rules of secrecy so many public men affect. Of his wit too he was copiously lavish, as only those are who have it in supreme abundance, giving of his very best to a single listener as freely as to a larger audience. This, I always think, is the test of genius in the department of brilliant talking, and no one ever shone there more conspicuously than he did. His worldly wisdom was wonderful. Nor was it confined to things at home, the House of Commons, and the intrigue of Downing Street. He was really the only English Radical, with Dilke, who had an accurate acquaintance with affairs abroad, and he had his Europe at his finger-ends. He would have made an admirable ambassador, where any difficult matters had to be carried through, and he ought certainly to have been given the Embassy he so much desired at Washington. It was always his ambition, even stronger I think than that of holding Cabinet Office, to go back to his old diplomatic profession and give serious proof of his capacity in a service

where, as a young man, he had played the fool. The Foreign Office would have found itself the stronger for his help.

Our sympathy, which had begun about Egypt, was carried on, I am glad to remember, during the years of stress which followed, also to Ireland; and from first to last my experience of his political action has been that of a man courageously consistent in his love of liberty, his hatred of tyranny, and his contempt of the insincerities of public life. He was never taken in by the false arguments with which politicians conceal their treacheries, and he was never himself a betrayer. If my testimony can be of any service to his memory as an honest man, I freely give it.

The last time I saw him was in the summer of 1902, when he came down with his wife and daughter to spend a week-end, July 12th to 14th, with me and my wife in Sussex. He had resolved to pass the rest of his days at Florence, and it was a farewell visit that he paid us. He had just bought Michael Angelo's Villa, and talked much about it and his design, philistine that he was, of turning it inside out, fitting it with electric light, and otherwise bedevilling it with modern improvements, uprooting the old trees in the *podere* and planting new ones. On matters of this sort he was a terrible barbarian, and took delight in playing the vandal with places and things which the rest of the world held in reverence. "Old Michael," he explained, "knew nothing about the comforts of a modern establishment, and it was time that he should learn them." Apart from this little *méchanceté*, he proved himself a most delectable companion, giving us a true feast of wit and wisdom the whole Sunday through. Sibyl, Lady Queensberry, was of our party, and Colonel Bill Gordon, General Gordon's nephew, with whom he had much talk about Khartoum and Egypt. Gordon was a good talker on his own subjects, and they got on well together, sitting up till half-past one the first night, telling story after story. Among them, I remember, Labouchere gave us accounts of his adventures in Mexico, and also of a ride he had taken from Damascus to Palmyra with Lady Ellenborough and her Bedouin husband, Sheykh Mijwel el Mizrab, with reminiscences of the early days we had spent together in the Diplomatic Service, his gambling acquaintances at Hombourg, and his duel in Sweden. He was especially interested in this visit to the Weald of Sussex, and in

his having passed in the train almost within sight of Broome Hall, under Leith Hill, where he had lived as a boy. He had not been that way since, he said. The second evening he was less brilliant, as Hilaire Belloc had joined our party, a rival talker to whom he left the monopoly of our entertainment. But it was an altogether pleasant two days that we passed together. I am glad to have the recollection of them. Alas, they were the last we were to see of him, for he left England soon afterwards, and we never met again.

CHAPTER IV

PARLIAMENTARY AMBITIONS

(1866–1869)

BEING asked on some occasion, "Why do men enter Parliament?" Mr. Labouchere replied: "Some of them enter Parliament because they have been local Bulls of Bashan, and consider that in the localities where they have roared, and pawed the ground, they will be even more important than heretofore; some because they want to be peers, baronets, and knights; some because they have a fad to air; some because they want to have a try at climbing the greasy pole of office; some because they have heard that the House of Commons is the best club in London; some because they delude themselves that they are orators; some for want of anything better to do; some because they want to make a bit out of company promoting; and some because they have a vague notion that they are going to benefit their country by their devotion to legislative business." He frankly confessed, however, that none of the above considerations had influenced him in his own decision to enter upon a parliamentary life. Curiosity had been his inducement in the first place, and secondly, a conviction that the House would benefit considerably from contact with so sound a Radical as himself.

In the autumn of the year that he left the Diplomatic Service, it was suggested to Mr. Labouchere by several

friends that he should come forward as a candidate in the next General Election for the borough of New Windsor. There was already another Liberal in the field—Mr. Flower of Stratford-on-Avon. Labouchere decided to confer with him on the subject. They met, accordingly, at the Reform Club, Labouchere having been previously warned by the Town Clerk of Windsor, Mr. Darvill, to act quite independently of Flower, as he was in the hands of agents, in whom the leading men of the place had little confidence. Mr. Labouchere describes in his own words the upshot of the interview: "We met at the Reform Club, in the presence of Mr. Grant (one of Flower's agents) and Mr. Darvill, junior. As, however, both of us evidently thought that only one Liberal could be returned at Windsor, and as each of us intended to be that Liberal, we separated without coming to any arrangement to act together."[1]

Labouchere then went abroad, returning to England in January for a fortnight, during which time he gave a dinner at Windsor, held a public meeting, and identified himself as much as it was possible to do, in so short a time, with the local interests of the borough. In May, 1865, Mr. Flower retired from the candidature, because he felt that his agents, Grant and Dunn, had compromised him by corrupt practices. As these gentlemen had hired as many as twenty public houses for committee rooms, a number ludicrously out of proportion to the size of the constituency, he acted wisely in doing so. He informed Labouchere of his decision. Mr. Darvill also wrote, recommending Labouchere to return to England, and if he really intended to stand for Windsor, to take some steps for insuring his return by appointing agents, and taking the usual preliminary precautions.

To continue the narrative in Mr. Labouchere's own words: "Sir Henry Hoare, a day or two after my return to England, called upon me to tell me that he had been in communication with Mr. Darvill, and that as Mr. Darvill

[1] *Times*, April 27, 1866.

had told me he thought that, if two Liberal candidates acted firmly together, both might be returned, he came to propose to me to make common cause with him. The next day we called together on Mr. Durrant, a London solicitor, who had acted for Sir Henry Hoare, and we begged him to go down to Windsor, and after seeing the principal Liberals, to report to us the state of affairs. This he did. He told us Mr. Flower had engaged twenty committee rooms—a number which was clearly too great, and he recommended us to take on nine of them. We sent him down to Windsor again to arrange about the committee rooms and about taking on agents, and he, in conjunction with Mr. Last, retained the usual Liberal agents, who were the same as had been engaged by Mr. Flower. It was distinctly understood at the same time, that we only took on nine committee rooms. Mr. Flower, after, I believe, a long correspondence with Mr. Cleave, agreed to pay for the eleven committee rooms which he had engaged. Sir Henry Hoare and I were both returned as members for Windsor."

It was an unfortunate action, however, on the part of the two Liberal candidates to make use of the same agents who had compromised Mr. Flower, and it cost them their seats. The election took place in November, 1865, and the result of the poll was as follows:

Sir Henry Hoare	324 votes
Mr. Labouchere	323 "
Mr. Vansittart (Cons.) . . .	291 "
Col. Vyse (Cons.)	261 "

On April 26, 1866, the chairman of a select committee,[1] appointed to try the merits of the petition against the return

[1] The committee was composed as follows: Mr. John Tomlinson Hibbert (Chairman), Mr. Robert Dalglish, Mr. Arthur Wellesley Peel, Hon. Fredk. Stanley, and Major Waterhouse. It sat for six days. The counsel for the petitioners were: Mr. W. H. Cooke, Q.C., Mr. Matthews, and Mr. Campbell Bruce. For the defendants: Mr. Serjeant Ballantine and Mr. Biron.

of Sir Henry Hoare and Mr. Labouchere for the borough of New Windsor, on the grounds that it was obtained by means of bribery, treating, and undue influence, announced that the committee had arrived at the following determination:

"That Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare is not duly elected a burgess to serve in the present parliament for the borough of New Windsor. That Henry Labouchere, Esq., is not duly elected to serve in the present parliament for the borough of New Windsor. That Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare is, by his agents, guilty of bribery. That it has been proved that various acts of bribery have been committed by the agents of the sitting members by the engagement of an excessive number of public houses in which it was proved that none of the legitimate business of the election was transacted, and for which sums varying from £10 to £20 were paid. That it has not been proved that such acts were committed with the knowledge or consent of the said Sir Henry Hoare and the said Henry Labouchere, Esq. That the committee have no reason to believe that bribery and corruption extensively prevailed at the last election for the borough of New Windsor."

The committee had sat for six days before the above decision was arrived at, and many were the entertaining encounters between the defendants' counsel, the great Mr. Serjeant Ballantine, and the witnesses for the petitioners. One of the latter explained that he had voted for the Conservatives because Mr. Vansittart was a "very nice old man." Under cross-examination it was elicited with difficulty that Mr. Vansittart had not given his wife and daughter each a new dress. Being further pressed, he announced that he could prove it. "How?" questioned the counsel. "I have n't got no wife nor no daughter," complained the witness. A charge of presenting a silk gown to the wife of one of the electors was preferred against Henry Labouchere. He did not deny having done so. "The lady in question," he explained, "was extremely good-looking, and I have

had told me he thought that, if two Liberal candidates acted firmly together, both might be returned, he came to propose to me to make common cause with him. The next day we called together on Mr. Durrant, a London solicitor, who had acted for Sir Henry Hoare, and we begged him to go down to Windsor, and after seeing the principal Liberals, to report to us the state of affairs. This he did. He told us Mr. Flower had engaged twenty committee rooms—a number which was clearly too great, and he recommended us to take on nine of them. We sent him down to Windsor again to arrange about the committee rooms and about taking on agents, and he, in conjunction with Mr. Last, retained the usual Liberal agents, who were the same as had been engaged by Mr. Flower. It was distinctly understood at the same time, that we only took on nine committee rooms. Mr. Flower, after, I believe, a long correspondence with Mr. Cleave, agreed to pay for the eleven committee rooms which he had engaged. Sir Henry Hoare and I were both returned as members for Windsor."

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frequently noticed that a present of finery is a simple way to win the female heart. I regret that, in the particular case, I was unsuccessful, but, good God, you do not insinuate for a moment, do you, that I intended her husband to know anything about the affair?"

The line of defence taken up by Labouchere will easily be seen by reading the letter he sent to the *Times* the day after the committee had reached their decision. I give it in full, with the exception of some sentences that have already been quoted:

ALBANY, April 26.

SIR,—In an article to-day on the recent decision of the Election Committees, you allude to the case of Windsor.

As your observations tend to lead those who read them to form the conclusion that my late constituents are somewhat corrupt, in justice to them, I should feel obliged to you to allow me to say a few words in their defence. It may be useful to future candidates to know on what grounds Sir Henry Hoare and I have been unseated. . . .

We were petitioned against on the usual charges of bribery and intimidation. To the charges of direct bribery and indirectly bribing by the promise of work we replied, I believe, to the satisfaction of the Committee. The case of the petitioners rested upon the charge that we had engaged too many committee rooms.

The Committee unseated us because: "It had been proved that acts of bribery had been committed by the engagement, by the agents of the sitting members, of an excessive number of public houses, in which it was proved that none of the legitimate business of the election was transacted, and for which sums varying from £10 to £20 were paid. That it has not been proved that such acts were committed with the knowledge or consent of the said Sir Henry Hoare and the said Henry Labouchere."

Now this decision must have been come to on the supposition that Sir Henry Hoare and I were responsible for the eleven committee rooms, paid for by Mr. Flower, because we both swore that the nine committee rooms were taken with "knowledge and consent." The Committee consequently must have concluded either that Mr. Flower, Mr. Durrant, Sir H. Hoare, and myself

were guilty of perjury in swearing that the payment by Mr. Flower was *bona fide*, or that Sir H. Hoare and I, in taking on agents in May, became responsible for what these agents had done in the interests of a third party during the winter.

Our case rested on the fact that "none of the legitimate business of the election" was transacted in Mr. Flower's public houses, and that if a bill with the words "Committee Rooms" was hung over any room in Mr. Flower's public houses it was because the publicans considered they would advertise their own political principles by showing that they had been engaged by a Liberal candidate who had retired. Every one knows that, if an electioneering bill over a public house is an advertisement for a candidate, it is also an advertisement for the public house, and that publicans like it to be supposed that they belong to one or other of the parties during a contested election. As a matter of fact some of Mr. Flower's publicans did not vote for me.

I may then fairly state that my late colleague and I were unseated because one of our agents had been concerned, months before he became our agent, in taking public houses in undue numbers for Mr. Flower.

Now, sir, I would venture to call the attention of the Legislature to the new and strange principle of jurisprudence on which the decision of the Windsor Election Committee has been based. I do so in the interests of all candidates, for, as far as I am concerned, I have unfortunately no appeal against the decision.

It is sufficiently difficult to prevent over zealous committee men and agents from compromising their candidate during the election; but, if he is to be retrospectively responsible for all their previous acts, I venture to say that no candidate can expect to hold his seat against a petition. Were the retrospective responsibility introduced into the procedure of courts of law no man would be safe. I might, sir, to-morrow have the advantage of making your acquaintance. Some days later I might take a servant whom you had formerly employed. Ought I to be hung if it were subsequently shown that you and the servant had murdered some one last January in London, while I was in Italy?

Were I still a member of the Legislature, I should myself point out the necessity of a reform in the composition of election

committees. As an elector of Westminster, I shall, through my representative, Capt. Grosvenor, present a petition to the House of Commons praying that some alteration be made in the present system, and that a properly qualified judge be added to every committee to explain the elementary principles of jurisprudence to well-intentioned gentlemen who know nothing about them.[1] —I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

H. LABOUCHERE.

A number of extremely interesting letters appeared in the *Times*, on the subject of the New Windsor Election Petition, one other, only, of which I shall quote, as it puts the case for Mr. Labouchere and his colleagues in a perfectly clear light. It runs as follows:

SIR,—My name having prominently appeared in the proceeding before the Election Committee in this case, and in communications made to you by Sir Henry Hoare and Mr. Labouchere, complaining of the decision of the committee, I trust you will not refuse me an opportunity of corroborating their statements. I may say, as a prelude, that the agents had the most distinct directions to do nothing in contradiction of the statutes relating to the election of members to serve in Parliament, and I proved, in evidence, my written instructions to that effect.

Sir Henry Hoare and Mr. Labouchere, being aware that Mr. Flower had retired by reason of his belief that he had been compromised by his agents, were most anxious to avoid becoming in any way identified with their proceedings; and, as regards the public houses, which had been taken on his behalf, the late members entirely repudiated, both personally, and through me, having anything whatever to do with them.

No one had authority to hire committee rooms but Mr. Last, the head agent at Windsor, and no complaint is made in the Committee's Report in respect of the nine houses engaged by him. Not a shilling has, to my knowledge or belief, been paid, or promised on account, of what I may, for brevity, call "Mr. Flower's public houses"; so that, in fact, these houses were

[1] *Times*, April 27, 1866.

neither hired by, paid for, nor used by the late members or their agents.

The unseating, therefore, of the late members for New Windsor upon the grounds stated in the Report of the Committee is, I venture to suggest, unprecedented in the annals of election petitions, and affords just ground for complaint, and for giving, in future cases some appeal, where there may be a similar miscarriage of justice.[1]—I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

G. J. Durrant.

Henry Labouchere made his maiden speech during the six months that he was member for New Windsor. It was upon an uninteresting and complicated subject—namely, the inadequacy of our Neutrality Law to enable us to fulfil our international obligations towards foreign countries. The debate, begun in February, continued well into the March of 1866. Labouchere made his speech on the 22nd of February. During the course of it he said that, having passed ten years in the Diplomatic Service, he had given some consideration to the subject of International Law, which had led him to believe that, from defects and inefficiency, our Neutrality Law was fraught not only with future danger to ourselves, but was calculated to prevent us from acting justly towards our Allies. He quoted, in support of his argument, the relations of England with the United States of America, the sympathy of America with Fenianism, and our loss of commerce with America.[2] On March 7 he voted in favour of the Church Rates Abolition Bill, which was read for the second time on that day and committed.

Of course he was very funny on the subject of the election at New Windsor. He was fond of relating how it was that he first became an M.P. "I had to kiss the babies," he said, "pay compliments to their mothers, and explain the beauties of Liberalism to their fathers, who never could be got to say how they would vote. On the day of the election everything

[1] *Times*, April 27, 1866.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. 181, s. 3.

turned upon half a dozen votes. I remember one Tory went out to fish in a punt, and the boatman who accompanied him was induced to keep him well out in the middle of the river, until the polling hour had passed. Another aged and decrepid Tory was kept in the house by having cabs run at him whenever he tried to issue from his door. Finally the Liberals won the day. On this the Tories petitioned. The committee decided that there had been no bribery, but unseated my colleague and myself because they thought that we had hired an excessive number of committee rooms."

And again: "One man at this election amused me. He hung about outside my committee room, and whenever he saw me he wrung my hand. On my first interview with this patriot, he informed me that, at an early hour of the morning, he had personated Dr. Cumming, and had voted for me as that divine. Each time I saw him during the day, he said that he had been personating some one, and always a clergyman. I remonstrated with him but uselessly."

The playwright, Herman Merivale, tells an anecdote about Henry Labouchere, in connection with the Windsor election, which it is very probable he heard from the whilom member himself. "Lord Taunton," writes Merivale, "uncle and precursor of our more famous Labby, is fabled to have lived in a general state of alarm at the strange proclivities of that unchastened heir, who has furnished the world with more amusing stories of a curious humour than any public man of his time. It is said that when Lord Taunton heard that his nephew contemplated public life, and proposed to stand for one of the county divisions in the district, he was much pleased at such a sign of grace, and asked if he could do anything for him. 'Really I think not,' replied the younger Henry, 'but I don't know. If you would put on your peer's robes, and walk arm-in-arm with me down the High Street of Windsor, it might have a good effect."[1]

Another opportunity soon occurred for Labouchere to re-

[1] Herman Merivale, *Bar, Stage, and Platform.*

enter the House of Commons. On the death of Mr. Robert Hanbury, one of the members for Middlesex, he presented himself to the electors, and was returned without opposition, on April 16, 1867. An extract from his address to the electors, dated March 29, is not without interest, as in it he unblushingly gives expression to the democratic principles to which he remained so faithful throughout his career. "Should you do me the honour," he said, "to return me to Parliament, it would be my first duty to co-operate with those who desire to effect the passage of an honest and straightforward measure of reform—such a measure as would prove to the large body of artisans and working men, whom I hold to be entitled to the franchise, that the House of Commons is not afraid of the people, nor averse to the free extension of political privileges, nor disposed to deny to the intelligent operatives a share in the government of the country to whose burdens they are called upon to contribute. If the Reform Bill proposed by the Tory Ministry is not capable of adaptation to such an end, I should not hesitate to give my adherence to any cause which may seem the most calculated to attain the desired object."[1]

While he was member for Middlesex, Labouchere was assiduous in his parliamentary duties. He spoke frequently and to the point, on such subjects as the "Expenses of Voters,"[2] on "the Sale of Liquor on Sundays Bill"[3] (a characteristically amusing speech), on "Licences" (Brewers'),[4] on the "Military Knights of Windsor attending Church,"[5] on "Appeals in the House of Lords."[6] He objected to a vote to complete the sum of £2135 for building new Embassy houses in Madrid and Paris,[7] and offered some practical suggestions as to the building (or buying) of new Embassy buildings at Therapia.[8]

[1] *Times*, April 2, 1867.
[2] *Times*, July 5, 1867.
[3] *Times*, March 19, 1868.
[4] *Times*, March 25, 1868.
[5] *Times*, June 24, 1868.
[6] *Times*, May 29, 1868.
[7] *Times*, May 1, 1868.
[8] *Times*, April 21, 1868.

In short, he was an active and useful member. The speeches which have been most frequently quoted are the ones which he made on May 14, protesting against a vote of £137,524, for the upkeep of the Royal Parks and Pleasure Grounds,[1] and his two speeches on the Public Schools Bill.[2] In the former he asserted that it was unjust and quite illogical to prohibit the entrance of cabs into Hyde Park. Most of his friends, he announced, were not in a position to keep their own carriages, yet they passionately longed to drive about in the haunts of fashion. He himself suffered cruelly under the same longing and disability, and such an exclusion, he explained, was quite incompatible with the spirit of Liberalism. He referred to the regulations concerning the public parks of Vienna and Paris to show that the prejudice against hired vehicles was entirely British and snobbish.

On another occasion, Mr. Lowe had moved a clause to the effect that boys educated at public schools should be examined once a year, by an Inspector of Education, in simple reading, writing, and arithmetic, and that a report as to their attainments should be laid before Parliament.

On this Labouchere made an excellent speech. In the course of it, he said that he hoped Mr. Lowe's clause would be pressed to a division, because it was evident that most pupils at public schools did not know as much as an average charity boy. Complaint had been made that the whole time of public school boys was taken up by the study of Latin and Greek, but, as a matter of fact, they learned very little of these languages. An ordinarily educated German could converse with a foreigner in Latin, if the two had no other language in common, but how many Englishmen carried from a public school sufficient Latin to do this? He confessed that he himself, although he might be able to translate some half a dozen words of Latin, was wholly unable to translate a sentence of Greek, although he had studied those languages for years at a public school. He complained that this

[1] *Times*, May 15, 1868. [2] *Times*, June 17 and 24, 1868.

ignorance was the fault of a system, and the misfortune of those who were obliged to undergo it.

Mr. Labouchere used to relate the following reminiscence of the days when he was member for Middlesex: "It is a curious fact—such is the irony of fate—that these dues (the Middlesex Coal Dues) were once prolonged owing to me. About twenty years ago, I was member for Middlesex. A Bill was brought forward to prolong the dues in order to borrow the money for certain Metropolitan improvements. Now the dues are collected from the inhabitants, not only of the metropolis, but of all Middlesex. My constituents wanted the bridges over the Thames and the Lea, beyond the Metropolitan area, to be freed. So I persistently opposed the Bill by much talking, by amendments, and other such devices (for although blocking had not been invented, obstruction was even then not without its resources). This led to negotiation, and it was finally agreed that the prolongation should be for a still longer period than was proposed by the Bill, in order that money should also be borrowed to free the bridges."[1]

Lord Derby's administration, under which Labouchere had become one of the Liberal members for Middlesex, was succeeded by the first administration of Mr. Disraeli. In December, 1868, the General Election took place, by which Mr. Gladstone, in his turn, was put, for the first time, at the head of Queen Victoria's Government. Mr. Labouchere presented himself for re-election at Middlesex in November. It was at first thought that both the sitting members, himself and Lord Enfield, would have a quiet "walk-over." The Conservatives, however, were determined to put forward at least one candidate, and they selected Lord George Hamilton, the third son of the Duke of Abercorn.

On November 2, both Henry Labouchere and Lord Enfield issued their addresses, Lord Enfield appealing to his electors on grounds no more vital than that he had repre-

[1] *Truth*, November 25, 1886.

sented Middlesex in Parliament for the last eleven years, and Mr. Labouchere because he frankly avowed himself in favour of the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Ireland as being likely to strengthen the establishment of the Church of England in the sister isle, and, to quote verbatim from his speech: "I shall," he said, "oppose the proposal which was made last year by the Government of Mr. Disraeli to endow a Roman Catholic university. While I respect the sincere convictions of my Roman Catholic countrymen and desire that their religious convictions should not subject them either to civil or political disqualification, I do not think that their Church or their educational establishments should have any portion of the revenues now enjoyed by the established Church." He went on to say: "Since a Conservative Government has been in power the public departments have vied with each other in extravagance. The efforts of private members in which I have joined have proved ineffectual to check the waste. The sooner Mr. Gladstone is in office the better for the taxpayer."[1]

The two Liberal candidates made public speeches to their electors on the same day that they issued their addresses. Labouchere made his in the British Schools at Brentford, and the points on which he argued were the disestablishment of the Irish Church and the waste of public money. The selection of Lord George Hamilton as the Conservative candidate gave him an opportunity of making some extremely annoying remarks. He referred to him as "a young gentleman who had lately joined the army—an unfledged ensign who was getting on with the goose step and preparing himself for the onerous duties connected with the Horse Guards," and other taunting remarks of a similar nature.

The embryo M.P., on November 9, stung to madness by Labouchere's witticisms, boldly announced himself as his opponent in particular. He hotly denied that his father had received annually for many years a large sum of money from

[1] *Times*, November 3, 1868.

the State and then had been made a duke for his kindness in having accepted it. The Conservative meeting at which the young guardsman spoke would have been a decided political success had it not been for the zeal of the gentleman who seconded the vote of confidence. He remarked that, ever since the day when King John had signed the Magna Charta, the people of this country had been indebted to the aristocracy for all the liberties enjoyed in the Empire. Storms of groans and hisses met his well-meant remark, and though the vote of confidence was passed, the show of hands was manifestly against it.[1]

But the real interest of the election was centred in the personal quarrel between the Liberal candidates, which resulted in a Tory being returned for Middlesex. They appeared each to be possessed with an ungovernable hatred for the other, which was extremely prejudicial to their cause. The occasion of their public rupture was a dispute over the selection of electioneering agents, and by November 12 the attitude of the belligerents had become so extremely abusive that an important conference of Liberals from all parts of Middlesex had to be convened to consider the disunited state of their interest, more especially as it related to the relative bearing of the candidates towards each other.

Whereupon Labouchere and Enfield each addressed a public meeting and gave their separate versions of the quarrel. The delight of the Tories was excessive, and they did all they could to foment the affair. The *Times* rose to unaccustomed heights of irony in a leading article occasioned by the following not exactly conciliatory letter addressed by Labouchere to its editor:

> Sir,—In the interests of the party Lord Enfield and I would do well to adjourn the discussion of all personal differences until after the Election. Lord Enfield had distinctly refused to unite before those differences arose; our discussion therefore has nothing to do with our political disunion.

[1] *Times*, November 10, 1868.

The constituency wish our union, I wish it too—but personal relations need not be renewed. Lord Enfield considers himself and Lord George Hamilton to be what he is pleased to call "scions of a noble stock." I am a man of the middle class. He considers himself my superior. Let us agree to differ on this point.—Yours truly,

HENRY LABOUCHERE.

"It is fortunate," remarked the *Times*, "that the Liberal majority bids fair to be a large one, for otherwise the future historians of Great Britain might have a somewhat undignified episode to narrate in the electioneering contest of 1868, between the two great parties of the State. If the Liberals and the Conservatives happened to be running each other so closely that one seat more or less might determine the policy of the new Parliament, the Middlesex election would probably have an odd part to play in British annals. Every reader of Liberal imagination can easily conjure up for himself a picture of the calamities that might, under evil stars, overtake this country if the Liberals found themselves not strong enough to carry out their present programme, and the Irish Church were left still standing, with Ireland, as the natural result of so much anxious and fruitless agitation, more discontented than ever. Let him then suppose that all these imagined misfortunes had to be borne in consequence of his party having lost a seat for Middlesex, because Lord Enfield objects 'on personal grounds' to Mr. Labouchere! Lord Chesterfield has told us that great events are really due to much smaller causes than historians, with a duly jealous regard for the dignity of their profession, dare admit. The Liberal majority in the next Parliament might, if it so happened, be lost and the programme of national policy at a critical moment reversed because Mr. Labouchere has called Lord Enfield 'a sneak,' and Lord Enfield objects to Mr. Labouchere's want of blue blood! We doubt whether Gibbon himself could give the proper professional air of historical dignity to such an episode

in the decline and fall of Great Britain as this. According to the first report of this squabble we read, Lord Enfield distinctly refused to meet Mr. Labouchere, while Mr. Labouchere, after showing that he had hitherto all along conducted himself as a very model of meekness, bearing endless snubs and rebuffs from his haughty adversary for the public good, suddenly turned round and insisted that he would 'fight single-handed' without any reference to his brother Liberal. It appears that, if the Liberals work properly, the Conservative candidate, despite all the advantages of high birth and impetuous youth, ought to be beaten, but that otherwise he has a chance of success. It would be too bad if a Liberal seat were thus endangered, and we trust Lord Enfield will accept Mr. Labouchere's compromise, and console himself by reflecting that he can still object as strenuously as ever to his plebeian adversary in private."[1]

Lord Enfield protested angrily in the next day's *Times* against the accusation of having referred to himself as a "scion of a noble house," and, oddly enough, his letter appeared just below one sent to the paper by the Committee of the Reform Club:

THE REFORM CLUB, *Monday Evening.*

The Committee of the Reform Club having, in consequence of the suggestions which have been made to them, taken into consideration the differences between Lord Enfield and myself, and having expressed an opinion that it is due to Lord Enfield that I should withdraw certain offensive expressions which I used concerning him, and that I should now express my regret for having used them, and, as I am now informed by the Committee that they have ascertained from Lord Enfield that he had no intention of doubting my word, as I imagined he did, on the occasion I referred to, I have no hesitation in at once acting on the advice of the Committee.

H. LABOUCHERE.

[1] *Times*, November 14, 1868.

A patch was thus temporarily placed over the breach, for the benefit of the public, but the electors of Middlesex had no delusions on the subject.

The meeting for the nomination of candidates at Brentford was a rowdy affair, the proceedings being of a most disorderly nature. The re-election of Lord Enfield was proposed and the proposition was received with groans and hisses. Then Labouchere's re-election was proposed. At that point the disorder became uncontrollable. The interruption had commenced with the appearance of a band of roughs, wearing the Conservative card in their hats, who began to hoot and groan at the Liberal speakers. After this had gone on for a few minutes, another band, not quite so numerous, but of the same low class, poured into the square, bearing the Liberal cards on their hats. The two rival factions severally hooted the speaker on the opposite side. The roughs who were first in the field (the Conservatives had engaged a band of a hundred roughs, seven of whom were known to be prize-fighters) then began to hustle the others, and had nearly borne them out of the square, when the police made a charge upon them, but without using their staves, and for a moment restored order. The same disorderly conduct was, however, renewed and several fights took place under the eyes of the sheriffs. The crowd swayed to and fro, and the din and uproar was so continuous and incessant that the rest of the proceedings had to be carried on in dumb show. When the sheriff called for a show of hands for Lord Enfield every hand on the right of a line drawn from the centre of the hustings was held up. For Mr. Labouchere about the same number seemed to go up. For Lord George Hamilton all the hands on the left of the line went up. The numbers seemed pretty nearly divided. It at first appeared that Mr. Labouchere had the show of hands, and the sheriffs had, it was believed, decided, or were about to decide, in his favour, when it was pointed out to them that many Conservatives had held up their hands for Lord Enfield, while, on the other hand, all the

Liberals had held up both their hands for Mr. Labouchere. The sheriffs, after consultation, accordingly declared that the show of hands was in favour of Lord Enfield and Lord George Hamilton.

The election took place on November 24, and the result of the poll was as follows:

Lord George Hamilton . . .	7638 votes
Lord Enfield	6387 "
Mr. Labouchere	6297 "

Before the declaration of the poll, two cabs with placards of "Plump for Enfield" were seen in the streets, which were followed by others bearing "Plump for Labouchere." This was believed to have been a ruse of the enemy, but there were some who thought it was a joke of Labouchere's. He however vehemently denied any knowledge of it. There was huge excitement at the official declaration of the poll. Henry Labouchere, "the real Liberal candidate," as he was called, had been met by his friends at Kew Bridge, who had accompanied him to the meeting. He was evidently the favourite,[1] and the populace took out his horses and insisted upon dragging his carriage through the town. Enfield was hissed and hooted. Labouchere made a dignified speech, in which he referred to the practical disenfranchisement of Middlesex, by its election of a Conservative and a Liberal, and he insisted strongly and ably upon the necessity of organisation in all electioneering work.

Mr. Labouchere published the following absurd reminiscence of this election in an early number of *Truth*: "A candidate knows very little of the details of his election, but, so far as I could make out, dead men played a very important part, on both sides, in this contest between Lord George and me. No sooner were the booths open than men long re-

[1] *Times*, November 27, 1868.

moved from party strife rose from their graves, and hurriedly voted either for him or for me."[1]

An amusing episode of the Middlesex election of 1868 was the mistake which the supporters of Mr. Labouchere made in mistaking Mr. Henry Irving for their defeated candidate. Mr. Labouchere himself related the story some sixteen years later, when there was a report current that the famous actor was about to offer himself as a parliamentary candidate. "Irving did once appear upon the hustings," he said, "and it was in this wise. I was the defeated candidate at a Middlesex election. Those were the days of hustings and displays, and it was the fashion for each candidate to go down to Brentford in a carriage and four to thank his supporters. On the morning of the day when I had to perform this function, Irving called upon me, and I invited him to accompany me. Down we drove. I made an inaudible speech to a mob, and we re-entered our carriage to return to London. In a large constituency like Middlesex, few know the candidates by sight. Irving felt it his duty to assume a *mine de circonstance*. He folded his arms, pressed his hat over his brows, and was every inch the baffled politician—defeated, sad, but yet sternly resigned to his fate. In this character he was so impressive that the crowd came to the conclusion that he was the defeated candidate. So woebegone, and so solemnly dignified, did he look that they were overcome with emotion, and, to show their sympathy, they took the horses out of the carriage and dragged it back to London. When they left us, I got up to thank them, but this did not dispel the illusion. 'Poor fellow,' I heard them say, as they watched Irving, 'his feelings are too much for him,' and they patted him, shook hands with him, and thanked him."[2]

A *Times* leader of November 30 made the following comments on the Middlesex election: "In Middlesex, the minority has been allowed not only a representative, but a

[1] *Truth*, April, 1878.

[2] *Truth*, April 24, 1884.

place at the head of the poll, by the selection of two Liberal candidates, almost avowedly in competition, and with some unexplained circumstance of personal antagonism. Though it is likely enough many of the votes have been split between the two successful candidates, it is evident on the face of the return that a better selected pair of Liberal candidates might have carried both seats. Few persons will quarrel with a result which gives one of the most important minorities in the kingdom a voice in Parliament, but the result is a fluke rather than the consequence of a sound intention or of a wise provision of law."

At the General Election of 1874, Mr. Labouchere made another attempt to enter the House of Commons. He first offered himself at Southwark, but, as he was one of six Liberal candidates, he withdrew, and presented himself for election at Nottingham. At Nottingham also there was a superfluity of Liberal candidates, but two of these, Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Laycock, would probably have got in, had it not been for the determined antagonism of Mr. Heath, the Labour candidate, to Mr. Labouchere. It was also asserted by the leading Liberals of the place that the seats were lost, because Mr. Labouchere's advanced Radicalism scandalised the Liberal supporters. Be that as it may, the result of the election was that two Conservatives were returned for Nottingham. Mr. Labouchere was as usual philosophical upon the subject of his unsuccessful election: "When one is in," he said, "one wants to be out, and when one is out, one wants to be in. La Bruyère says that no married people ever pass a week without wishing, at least once, that they were unmarried, and so I suspect it is with most M.P.'s."

There were many amusing stories about Mr. Labouchere current at this time. One of the best that appeared in the Nottingham papers during the election was the following: "He went to a fancy dress ball in London, wearing diplomatic uniform, and on presenting himself at the door, he was refused admission by a policeman. 'Why?' said Mr.

Labouchere. 'Because no one is allowed here in a diplomatic uniform,' said the 'bobby.' 'Confound your impudence,' growled the ex-member for Middlesex, 'I will go in.' 'Not in diplomatic dress, no one 's to pass here in diplomatic togs,' repeated Mr. Bluebottle; 'my order is to watch this door for that special purpose.' 'What 's your name, scoundrel?' yelled the financial editor of the *World;* 'my name is Labouchere, and I will enter.' 'And mine,' rejoined the amateur policeman, 'is Lionel Brough.' They walked upstairs arm-in-arm together."

CHAPTER V

JOURNALISM AND THE STAGE

(1864–1880)

AFTER he had been unseated for Windsor, Mr. Labouchere went abroad for some months, most of which time he spent at Nice. He also went to Florence, and was at Homburg, in 1868, just before the General Election. His connection with journalism began at this period, as he sent frequent letters to the *Daily News*, both from Nice and Florence. These were always remarkable for their pithiness and wit, although he had by no means developed the style which he brought to perfection two years later as "The Besieged Resident," and which made his fame as a journalist. In 1868, he became part proprietor of the *Daily News*, which it was decided to issue for the future as a penny paper.[1] Sir John Robinson thus describes the syndicate of which Mr. Labouchere became a member: "The proprietors of the *Daily News*, a small syndicate which never exceeded ten men, were a mixed body, hardly any two of whom had anything in common. The supreme control in the ultimate resort rested with three of them, Mr. Henry Oppenheim, the well-known financier, with politics of no very decided kind; Mr. Arnold Morley, a Right Honourable, an ex-party Whip,

[1] *The Daily News* was the first Liberal daily paper to be published in London and at first cost fivepence. It was afterwards reduced to threepence.

and a typical ministerial Liberal; and Mr. Labouchere, the Radical, financier, freelance. Others had but a small holding, and practically did not count, save as regards any moral influence they might bring to bear on their colleagues at Board meetings."[1]

The new editor selected for the penny *Daily News* was Mr. Frank Hill, but the paper was run at a loss until the winter of 1870, when the special war news published in its columns caused the circulation to increase in one week from 50,000 to 150,000. Mr. Robinson, its far-seeing manager, attributed the success of the paper, at this period, first, to the excellence of his correspondents, and secondly, to his having insisted upon having the whole of his news telegraphed to London, instead of being transmitted by the post. The number of the correspondents on the staff of the *Daily News* during the war was seventeen, of which the chief was Mr. Archibald Forbes, who may be rightly described as a prince among journalists. Henry Labouchere too had the *main heureuse* where newspapers were concerned. His Paris letters were eagerly read all over the civilised world, the excitement and interest created by them being even more vehement in America than in London. The fortune of the *Daily News* was made,[2] and from then onwards for many years the great organ of Liberalism grew and flourished. When Mr. Labouchere sold his share[3] in 1895 he did so at a large profit. As I shall not have occasion to return again to Mr. Labouchere's financial connection with the *Daily News*,

[1] Sir John Robinson, *Fifty Years of Fleet Street.*

[2] It was humorously said at the period that Mr. Robinson (the Manager of the *Daily News*) and Count Bismarck were the only persons who had gained by the war, and that only the former deserved to do so.

[3] Mr. Labouchere gave the following reasons for severing his connection with the *Daily News*. "On Mr. Gladstone's withdrawal from public life," he wrote in *Truth*, "the party, or rather a majority of the officialdom of the party became tainted with Birmingham imperialism. My convictions did not allow me to be connected with a newspaper which supported a clique of intriguers that had captured the Liberal ship, and that accepted blindly these intriguers as the representatives of Liberalism in regard to our foreign policy."

I shall give in this place an account Mr. Lionel Robinson recently wrote to me of the transaction: "So many contradictory statements have been put forward in the press with reference to the late Mr. Labouchere's pecuniary interest in the *Daily News*, that you may not be unwilling to find space for the recollections of one who heard at the time, and subsequently, various versions of the story. My own impression, derived from personal intercourse, is that some time about 1868 or a little later, Mr. Labouchere purchased a quarter share in the newspaper for about £14,000, and further, that the vendor was Mr. Henry Rawson of Manchester. I do not pretend to know what were the annual profits of the paper, beyond the fact that they increased enormously during the twenty years dating from the Austro-Prussian War and its subsequent developments. It was, therefore, not surprising that when Mr. Labouchere decided to sell his share in the paper it should have commanded a high price. I have heard it, from a certain distance of time from the event, placed as high as £92,000, but my personal recollection is that the sum mentioned by Mr. Labouchere was £62,000 or thereabouts."

In one of Mr. Labouchere's letters from Nice to the *Daily News* he gave a characteristic account of some of his compatriots abroad. The following quotation from it will show the reader that, if he had not yet acquired the style of his later work, the spirit of it was very active—the spirit which made him hate mediocrity and pretentiousness: "Here, as in almost every foreign watering-place, there is a colony of English Bohemians, who live among themselves, give each other tea parties and such mild festivities, frequent charity and other public balls, abuse each other and every one else, pet the English clergyman or denounce his doctrines, worry their Consul with every kind of complaint and requirement, and keep up a gallant and hopeless struggle to penetrate into foreign society. As most of them only speak their own language, as the men, who, no doubt, have many

solid virtues, are devoid of the art of pleasing in a mixed society, and the women, pillars as they are of virtue, have little of the Siren about them, foreign society does not respond to their advances."[1]

Labouchere was not so successful over his speculation in theatre property. In the October of 1867, Messrs. Telbin and Moore did up the New Queen's Theatre, formerly St. Martin's Hall, in Long Acre, and it was opened under the management of Mr. Alfred Wigan, one of the most accomplished comedians of the day. Mr. Alfred Wigan had a mysterious partner in management, and Herman Merivale, who had written a most successful farce, as the curtain raiser for the new theatre, gives a charming little account of his discovery of the identity of the mysterious personage. Alfred Wigan soon wanted some melodrama for the theatre, and Merivale wrote a play. Wigan told him that he must submit it to his partner. "Two or three days afterwards," writes Merivale, "I was sent in fear and trembling to the manager's room at the Queen's, to meet the mysterious partner. I was introduced, and, sitting at the table with a cigarette in his mouth, I saw Labouchere. 'Good Lord!' he said, 'are *you* the eminent author?' 'Heavens!' quoth I, 'are *you* the mysterious partner?'

"Both of us had carefully concealed our hidden sin at the dinner party.[2] What struck me most was a small array of bills of the new play hung all round, each printed with a different title, that the mysterious partner might see which looked best. It was, at all events, bold expenditure. *Time and the Hour* was the title that the authors[3] had hit upon; and Labouchere decided that it should be chosen. 'It 's a splendid title, I think,' he said. 'Delighted that you

[1] *Daily News*, Feb. 8, 1869.

[2] Merivale and Labouchere had recently met at a dinner party at the house of the former's father.

[3] Merivale had collaborated with Palgrave Simpson in the construction of the play.

say so,' was my flattered answer. 'It really is, you know. Do for any play whatever that ever was written.'"[1]

Time and the Hour, as it turned out, was, in its way, a kind of curiosity. For the cast comprised, besides Wigan himself, a whole bouquet of coming managers, some of whom were at the beginning of their professional careers. There were J. L. Toole, Lionel Brough, John Clayton, and Charles Wyndham. Other plays acted at the Queen's Theatre under Mr. Labouchere's management were Tom Taylor's *Twixt Axe and Crown*, and H. J. Byron's *Dearer than Life*. In the former the lovely Mrs. Wybert Rousby flashed for the first time in her full beauty on the London stage, and in the latter the cast included Henry Irving, J. L. Toole, John Clayton, Lionel Brough, and Charles Wyndham, and last, but most important of all, as Lucy, that clever artist and fascinating personality, Henrietta Hodson, who afterwards became Mrs. Labouchere. Another star at the Queen's Theatre, during the first year of Mr. Labouchere's management, was Ellen Terry. She thus describes herself playing there in the *Double Marriage*. "As Rose de Beaurepaire," she writes, "I wore a white muslin Directoire dress and looked absurdly young. There was one curtain which used to convulse Wyndham. He had a line, 'Whose child is this?' and there was I looking a mere child myself, and with a bad cold in my head too, answering: 'It 's *bine!*' The very thought of it used to send us off into fits of laughter."[2]

A contemporary picture of Mr. Labouchere at this time is given by Mr. George Augustus Sala, in his *Life and Adventures*. Mr. Labouchere had begged Sala to write him a play, full of exciting situations. "An appointment was made with him," said Sala, "to meet Halliday (another dramatic author) and myself at ten o'clock one evening at the Queen's Theatre. He was then one of the members for the County of Middlesex. He struck me as being in all respects a remark-

[1] Herman Merivale, *Bar, Stage, and Platform.*

[2] Ellen Terry, *The Story of my Life.*

able man, full of varied knowledge, full withal of humorous anecdotes, and with a mother wit very pleasant to listen to. His conversation was to me additionally interesting, because, when I was in Mexico, I had gone over most of the ground which he had travelled."

The first numbers of *Truth* abound with news of the Queen's Theatre, and the unvarnished accounts Mr. Labouchere gave of the contretemps that occurred during his management, and the strange, unexpected things that happened, possibly contributed to the lack of consideration he experienced as a theatrical manager. Here is part of an article devoted to the art of the stage, published during the first year of *Truth*: "The play on which I lost most was an adaptation of *The Last Days of Pompeii*. Everything went wrong in this piece. I wanted to have—after the manner of the ancients—acrobats dancing on the tight rope over the heads of the guests at a feast. The guests, however, absolutely declined to be danced over. Only one acrobat made his appearance. A rope was stretched for him, behind the revellers, and I trusted to stage illusion for the rest. The acrobat was a stout negro. Instead of lightly tripping it upon his rope, he moved about like an elephant, and finally fell off his rope, like a stricken buffalo. In the second act the head of a statue was to fall off, and to crush Mr. Ryder, who was a magician. There was a man inside the statue, whose mission was to push over its head. With folded arms and stern air, Mr. Ryder gazed at the statue, awaiting the portentous event that was to crush him to the earth, notwithstanding the mystic power that he wielded. The head remained firm on its neck. The man inside had solaced himself with so much beer, that he was drunk and incapable, and Mr. Ryder had, much to the amazement of the audience, to knock down the head that was to crush him. In the third act the stage represented a Roman amphitheatre. In the midst of a gorgeously dressed crowd sat Mr. Ryder. 'Bring forth the lion!' he said. The audience thrilled at the idea

of a real lion being marched on to the stage. Now I had no lion, and I had discarded the idea of putting a lion skin on a donkey. An attendant therefore walked in and said, 'Sir, the lion will not come.' Those of the audience who were not hissing, roared with laughter. The last act was to represent the eruption of Vesuvius and the destruction of Pompeii. The mountain had only been painted just in time for the 'first night.' I had never seen it. What was my horror when the curtain rose upon a temple with a sort of large sugar loaf behind it. At first I could not imagine what was the meaning of this sugar loaf. But when it proceeded to emit crackers I found that it was *Vesuvius!*"[1]

Sometimes he let the theatre, and on that subject he was almost pathetic: "Whenever this theatre is to let," he wrote, "I am complimented by numerous persons with proposals which prove that I am regarded by them as the most credulous and confiding of human beings—hardly indeed a human being, but a simple, convenient lamb . . . nothing that I can do convinces them that I am not a lamb covered with nice long wool and eager to be shorn. On these occasions I remember that the tempering of the wind to the shorn lamb is, after all, but a poetical figure, and therefore I take care to meet the tempest with a fleece on my back."[2] He had not a high opinion of dramatic artists, as men of business. "I confess," he said, "that for my own part I have never understood the meaning of high art in its dignified aspect. I never, in the course of my existence, came across one of its votaries—painter, sculptor, author, or architect—who was ready to sacrifice one farthing of his own at its shrine. I once was the owner of a theatre, and I was perpetually at war with authors and actors who wanted me to ruin myself on the altar of high art, but I soon found that this was a term which they used for their own fads. Once I produced a play by Charles Reade. It was a failure, and on the first night I was sitting with him in a box. 'They

[1] *Truth*, August 16, 1877. [2] *Ibid.*, June 12, 1877.

seem to be hissing, Mr. Reade,' I said. 'What of that?' he replied; 'if you want to please such a public as this, you should not come to me for a play.'"[1] He had an amusing story too to relate of how he rode roughshod over Tom Taylor's artistic prejudices by insisting upon a chemical fire being lit upon the stage at his production of the latter's *Joan of Arc*, in the flames of which the heroine (Mrs. Rousby) was to perish realistically, instead of being wafted to Heaven in the arms of angels, as the author had planned she should be. But the story of his theatre-management days that he was fondest of telling was in connection with the late Sir Henry Irving. The latter, at a big banquet he gave to a party of his friends, was relating some of the events of his professional career. "And to think, Labby," he said, turning to his old friend, "that I was once receiving five pounds a week from you!" "Three pounds, Henry, my boy," retorted Labouchere quickly, "only three."

He professed the greatest contempt, and considering the financial failure of his management of the Queen's Theatre, perhaps naturally so, for those stingy votaries of pleasure who were always cadging him for orders for his theatre. "Theirs," he said, "is the meanest, most sneaky and contemptible form of beggary." But he got the better of one of these beggars. One day his tailor asked him for an order. He sent it to him, but the next morning he sent the tailor an "order" entitling the bearer to a new suit of clothes. The tailor, realising the tit for tat, sensibly complied with the request, but ever afterwards bought his tickets for the "Queen's" in the conventional manner. Another set of persons who encountered his righteous wrath in his theatre days were the would-be dramatic authors. He described how hundreds of worthless plays were sent him, resembling, in their incoherence and lack of perspective, the crude pencil drawings of infants. He gave in *Truth* the opening of one of them, further than which, he explained, he did not read:

[1] *Truth*, Nov. 12, 1887.

"The broad Mississippi is seen rolling its turbid flood towards the ocean, and carrying with it the debris of a village. Steamers come and go on its surface. On a frail raft a man and a woman are crossing the river. Enter the negroes from a plantation monotonously singing."[1]

He attributed the failure of his own adaptation of Sardou's *La Patrie* to the narrow powers of appreciation possessed by Londoners. "They fancy," he wrote, "that no drama or melodrama can be good, which does not conform to certain rules. The heroine must be the purest and the best of her sex; she must engage in a struggle with adverse circumstances, and with bad men; and she must emerge, in the last act, triumphant. The audience, in fact, must leave the theatre, not only pleased with her acting, but with her. Now, the heroine of *Fatherland* is Dolores, and the plot turns upon her betrayal of her husband. This was fatal to the success of the play, but it is an open question whether it ought to have been fatal to it. Conventionalism is the bane of advance in art."

All things considered, it was not surprising that Mr. Labouchere's proprietorship of the Queen's Theatre was a financial failure. Joseph Hatton gives a curious description of the way in which Mr. Labouchere managed the business, the facts of which he got from the same personal interview already quoted: "Sometimes he brought out plays himself. He generally lost by them, but now and then had a success. Occasionally in the preparations for a new production he would go abroad. When particularly wanted by the management, he could not be found. The work went on, however, all the same, and so did the loss. Once he was advised to cram the house for a week with orders, so that nobody could get in. The traditional 'Full' was posted at all the entrances. He did this on condition that, after a week, every one should be compelled to pay. When the second week came the house was empty. Then the actors complained.

[1] *Truth*, November 8, 1877.

They could not act to empty benches. 'Why don't you draw?' was Labouchere's reply to their grievance. 'Draw! confound it! Why don't you draw?' He announced Shakespearean revivals, proposing to produce one new play of the bard's in splendid style every year. Notices were put up at all the entrances, inviting the audiences to vote on the piece. For a long time he worked up quite an excitement by posting up the result of the voting. 'This was a capital idea; it increased the number who paid at the door immensely.' Nevertheless the Queen's did not prove a success, and it has lately been converted into a co-operative store."[1]

At every period of his life, Mr. Labouchere displayed all the happiest characteristics of the Bohemian, or, what comes to the same thing, the instincts of the real aristocrat. He was comfortably at home in whatever social milieu he happened to find himself—a camp of nomadic Indians, a Court ball, a rowdy hustings, the manager's room of a London theatre, the *vie intime* of a royal country house, or the bourgeois domesticity of a thrifty German home—and he was welcomed and appreciated in every one of them—except by the prigs and the bores.

He knew his London well. "I have lived in London many years. I have known the seamy side of London life for far more than a quarter of a century, and am familiar with every detail of the 'old days' as they are called. I can compare the present with the past, decency with disgust, order with license, and remember the time when we supped in a cellar under the Portico, where the Pall Mall restaurant now stands, when the Haymarket cafés were open as long as customers patronised them. I can recall the nights when Panton Street and Jermyn Street were lined with watchmen and confederates, and admittance was only gained to certain favoured meeting-places by giving a sign, or peeping through a slit in the door or guichet. . . . I have seen a Chancellor

[1] Joseph Hatton, *Journalistic London.*

and a Cabinet Minister watching with amused gaze a scene, which was at least decorous on the surface, at the Argyll Rooms in Windmill Street, and, listening to excellent music, I have sat unnoticed up in the corner of the old Holborn Casino, where the Holborn restaurant now stands. I have seen some wild scenes at the Foley Street rooms (Mott's) in the early hours of the morning, and hideous scenes at 222 Piccadilly—the 'Pic' as it was then called—since pulled down and destroyed for the now palatial Criterion. In the warm summer nights I have driven down to Cremorne, and wandered there till the daylight, in lilac and purple, came out above the tall trees and put out the yellow glare of the gas. I have even condescended to the decorous dissipation of Caldwell's dancing rooms, beloved by milliners, and now turned into a National School. I have been an eye-witness of the ups and downs of London life, and the so-called humours of the West End. I have observed the contest between common-sense and prudery, between the men of liberal mind and those determined to make the vicious virtuous by Act of Parliament. I have lived through the changes of licensing rules and closing hours, and seen one place of amusement after another shut up and confiscated—the decorous tarred with the same brush as the dirty. Cremorne and the Holborn Casino bombarded equally with Mott's and the Piccadilly Saloon, . . ." he wrote in the course of an article, which ended with one of the most powerful indictments of British virtue ever published,[1] and it was during the sixteen years that elapsed between his departure from the Diplomatic Service and his entrance to the House as the "Christian" member for Northampton that he acquired most of his vast experimental knowledge of the artistic and vagabond side of human nature about town.

He was close upon fifty when he entered upon his serious Parliamentary life, which was, as all who knew him well are

[1] "The Ghastly Gaymarket," *Truth*, Dec. 8, 1881.

aware, but a phase, though an important one, in his extraordinarily varied career. Three episodes stand out with clearness, apart from his abortive electioneering experiences already described, in the years between 1864 and his first Northampton election—his residence in Paris throughout the siege, his connection with the *World*, as its financial editor, and his founding of his own weekly publication, *Truth*. The first of these is described in a separate chapter, and so, with equal necessity, is the third. For an account of how he came to be on the staff of the *World* we must go to the *Recollections* of the late Mr. Edmund Yates himself, who relates that, previous to launching the first number of his journal upon the public, he had issued a very original prospectus. "I had also sent a prospectus to Mr. Henry Labouchere," he continued, "with whom I had a slight acquaintance, and whose services as a literary freelance might, I thought, be utilised. Some days after, I saw Mr. Labouchere on the Cup Day at Ascot, seated on the box of a coach. I asked him if he had heard from me, and he said, 'Oh, yes,' adding that he 'thought the prospectus very funny.' 'But,' I said, 'will you help us in carrying it out—will you be one of us?' 'You don't mean to say,' he replied, 'that you actually mean to start a paper of the kind set forth?' I told him most assuredly we did, and that we wanted his assistance. He laughed more than ever, and said he would let me know about it. A few days after, I heard from him, proposing to write a series of city articles, which he actually commenced in the second number."

Labouchere's preliminary article in the *World*[1] was extremely droll. It began as follows: "Some years ago, Mr. John F. Walker, having derived a considerable fortune from cheating at cards in Mississippi steamboats, determined to enjoy his well-earned gains in his native city of New York, and purchased an excellent house in that metropolis. In order to add to his income he advertised that he was a

[1] *The World*, July 15, 1874.

'reformed gambler,' and, for a consideration, would instruct novices in all the tricks of his trade. Mr. Walker was universally esteemed by his fellow-citizens, and died last year, greatly regretted by a numerous body of friends and admirers. In casting about for the city editor for our journal, we have fallen upon a gentleman, who, by promoting rotten companies, puffing worthless stock, and other disreputable, but strictly legal, devices, has earned a modest competence. He resides in a villa at Clapham, he attends church every Sunday with exemplary regularity, and is the centre of a most respectable circle of friends; many of his old associates still keep up their acquaintance with him, and therefore he is in a position to know all that passes in the city. This reformed speculator we have engaged to write our city article."

The staff of writers selected by Mr. Yates for the first year of the *World* was a singularly efficient one. It comprised, besides Mr. Labouchere, Mr. T. H. S. Escott, Dr. Birkbeck Hill, Lord Winchelsea (who contributed articles on racing and turf matters), M. Camille Barrère, Mrs. Lynn Linton, Mr. F. I. Scudamore, Mr. Archibald Forbes, and Mr. Henry Lucy (who commenced, in the eighth number, his series of Parliamentary Sketches, "Under the Clock"). But, in spite of the excellent writers engaged on its production, the *World* did not sell well. Again it was the *main heureuse* of Henry Labouchere that gave the necessary push to make the new weekly go. Mr. Yates writes as follows: "Mr. Labouchere was dealing with City matters in a way which they had never been dealt with before, and ruthlessly attacking and denouncing Mr. Sampson, the city editor of the *Times*, whose position and virtue had hitherto been considered impregnable. All these features . . . received due appreciation from our provincial *confrères*, and the 'trade,' but, as yet, they seemed to have made no impression on the public. We were in the desperate condition of having a good article to sell without the power of making that fact known. At last, and just in the nick of time, we obtained the requisite

public notice, and without paying anything for it. A stockbroker, a member of the Stock Exchange, who conceived himself likely to be attacked for certain practices by Mr. Labouchere in the city article, threatened to horsewhip that gentleman, should such observations appear, and Mr. Labouchere had the would-be assailant brought before the Lord Mayor for threatening to commit a breach of the peace. The case was really a trivial one, and it was settled by the defendant being bound over in sureties for good behaviour. But it had been argued at full length, each side being represented by eminent lawyers; Mr. Thesiger, Q.C., appeared for the defendant and Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Lewis for Mr. Labouchere. A great deal was said about the *World*, and its determination to purge Capel Court of all engaged in iniquitous dealings. All that was said was reported at length in the daily papers. The effect was instantaneous; the circulation rose at once, and the next week showed a very large increase of advertisements."

The case, as Mr. Yates says, was a trivial one, but remarkable for Mr. Labouchere's irresistibly funny way of giving evidence. It was tried on October 14, 1874, at the Guild Hall, and in answer to the Lord Mayor, he gave the most absurd account of the assault as it occurred:

"'I said to him (Mr. Abbott): "I presume that if you were attacked in a newspaper unfairly, you would bring an action for libel, and if you won it you would get heavy damages." He replied: "I should not go into Court; I know what newspapers want; they always want to go into Court, it is a fine advertisement for them. I should horsewhip the man." "Well," I said, "under the circumstances, the observation is a personal one, and I reply to you, in the words of Dr. Johnson, 'I shall not be deterred from unmasking a scoundrel by the menaces of a ruffian.'" He then said he presumed I meant this for him, or something of that sort. I said, "Well, it looks like it. You were just now talking about horsewhipping; why don't you begin?"'

"*Mr. Thesiger:* 'In that tone of voice?'

"'Very much like that,' drawled on Mr. Labouchere. 'He then stared at me, and I repeated: "Well, why don't you begin?" I don't know what his object was, but he rolled himself about and threw up his hands. I presume he intended to frighten me by an exhibition of what he imagined to be a pugilistic attitude more than anything else. I again said: "Why do you not begin?" He then hit me a blow.'"

"Have you any fear of Mr. Abbott?" asked Mr. Lewis, later on in the proceedings. "Well, no," replied Mr. Labouchere. "When I was at Spezia, I used to bathe a good deal in the Gulf and there were a quantity of porpoises—" But what Mr. Abbott's behaviour had to with porpoises, was never revealed to the Court, for, in spite of the hisses of the audience, who wanted to hear the end of Mr. Labouchere's story, Mr. Thesiger interrupted, saying sharply: "This is really making a farce of a Court of Justice."

"I am a calculator, not a speculator," was one of Labouchere's retorts to Mr. Thesiger. "A distinction," said Mr. Thesiger, when summing up for his client, "that Mr. Labouchere will be able to explain to his own satisfaction, but perhaps not to that of other people."

Mr. Grenville Murray was another able writer on the staff of the *World*, and was for some time Mr. Yates's partner in the proprietorship of the paper, but the partnership was dissolved because Mr. Yates disapproved of Murray's repeated attacks upon Lord Derby. It would have been well if Mr. Labouchere had been as prudent as Mr. Yates. When Mr. Labouchere started *Truth*, he persuaded Mr. Grenville Murray to write some of his "Queer Stories," and it was one of these that brought upon the editor of *Truth* the wrath, never to be assuaged, of a very important personage. Mr. Labouchere told me once that, by some accident, he never saw the "Queer Story" in question, until it had actually appeared in print. Had he done so, he should never have

permitted its publication. Reference had already been made to Mr. Labouchere's somewhat imprudent championship of the ex-Consul of Odessa, but, when it was asserted in a much-read weekly that Mr. Labouchere was the proprietor of the *Queen's Messenger*,[1] he was obliged to send the following letter to the *Times:*

2 Bolton Street, July 5, 1869.

Sir,—Having been informed that the proprietorship of the *Queen's Messenger* has been attributed to me by a weekly newspaper, I shall be much obliged to you to allow me a space in your columns to deny the statement. I have not, and never had, directly or indirectly, anything to do with the *Queen's Messenger*.

Henry Labouchere.

An old member of the staff of the *World*, in a recently published article commenting upon certain unintentional misstatements of a definite nature that had appeared from time to time in the press in connection with the two gifted editors respectively of the *World* and *Truth*, said, after dealing with one relating to Mr. Labouchere's supposed partnership with Mr. Yates: "Equally contrary to fact is the statement, even more generally made and accepted, that Mr. Labouchere severed his connection with the *World*, and founded *Truth*, as the sequel of personal differences between himself and his sometime editor. No such personal differences occurred at any period; and, though Yates would have been more than human if he had rejoiced at the decision of a particularly able member of his staff to leave him, in order to start another journal, planned on parallel lines and appealing to the same

[1] Mr. Grenville Murray, who was the editor of the *Queen's Messenger*, was assaulted by Lord Carrington on account of an article he wrote about the latter's father, and out of the case which Mr. Grenville Murray brought against Lord Carrington arose Mr. Murray's prosecution for perjury, which resulted in his departure from England. He died in Paris in 1881. It was at the time of the scandal aroused by the article for which Lord Carrington assaulted Grenville Murray, that Mr. Labouchere was accused of being the proprietor of the paper.

public, he was far too shrewd a man of the world to show any sense of grievance or resentment. It happened that the news of Mr. Labouchere's project first reached his editor's ears through the medium of a third person; and on being challenged by Yates, as to the truth of the rumour, the imperturbable 'Labby' characteristically replied that he had decided for the future to have a pair of boots of his own with which to do his own kicking. Rivals, in a journalistic sense, as they thenceforth necessarily became, the friendly personal relations between the two were maintained to the last, and the weekly mutual corrections of 'Henry' by 'Edmund' and vice versa, which caused so much diversion to the readers of both papers, were conducted at all times in an entirely amicable spirit."[1]

Mr. Montesquieu Bellew, another journalist of that time, was an *intime* of Mr. Labouchere's. On the occasion of Mr. Bellew's son choosing the stage as his profession, Mr. Labouchere took the opportunity of writing in *Truth* a racy article, in which he related the whole story of his friendship and travels in company with this most unconventional parson. They must indeed have been a queer pair, and it is interesting to imagine the effect they must have produced together at the various *tables d'hôte* and social functions they attended on their journey. They became acquainted in this wise. Mr. Labouchere was idling one day on the steps of his hotel at Venice, when he noticed a gentleman paying his bill and tipping the porters preparatory to taking his departure. His carriage was waiting for him at the door. "Where are you going?" said Mr. Labouchere, on the impulse of the moment. "To the Holy Land," replied the stranger. "Wait five minutes," replied Labouchere, "and I will come with you." He flew to his room and flung his clothes into his portmanteau and joined Mr. Bellew, who was waiting for him. He did not, however, discover the identity of his travelling companion until they reached Jerusalem, although he knew that he was

[1] *The World*, Jan. 23, 1912.

a clergyman, because every night before retiring to rest Mr. Bellew pressed a manuscript sermon into his hand, for "night-reading." At Jerusalem, Mr. Bellew broke to him that, his bishop being in the place, he should probably be asked to preach in the English Church. Labouchere took this as a hint that Mr. Bellew would like him to be present, so he made his plans accordingly. Finding out at what precise moment of the service the sermon would begin, he marched into the church with great impressiveness, at the head of a large band of Arabs and others, whom he had bribed to accompany him. This, he explained afterwards to Bellew, was to create in the bishop's mind the impression that Bellew was such a prodigy of piety that even the inhabitants of the country places of Syria had heard of his fame and were come in flocks to gaze upon him. The bishop's annoyance on the occasion he assured Bellew was entirely due to his jealousy of his more popular *confrère*. They quarrelled on the journey. Bellew pointed out to Labouchere a small stream. "That," he said, "is the source of the Jordan." Labouchere pointed out another stream, declaring that that and that alone was the source of the Jordan. They argued the matter hotly, but Labouchere was not aware how deeply Bellew had taken the affair to heart, until he found himself in bed that night with no manuscript sermon under his pillow. But Bellew was a Christian and a man of tact. The next day in the course of their wanderings, they came upon another minute trickle of water. "That," said Bellew, with a note of conciliation in his voice, "is the source of the Jordan; we were both in the wrong yesterday." "Of course it is," assented Labouchere; "how in the world we came to make such a mistake I can't imagine." From Jerusalem they went on to the Dead Sea. Bellew had picturesque-looking long white hair, which he would comb and arrange before a looking-glass that accompanied him on all his travels. This looking-glass got upon Labouchere's nerves, so one day "I got hold of it," he related, "and sent it to join Sodom and Gomorrah beneath the

gloomy waters that stretched out beneath us. The next night, we pitched our tent in the desert. Dire was the confusion on rising. The looking-glass could not be found. I held my tongue respecting its fate. Probably some day or another some eminent explorer, poking about the bottom of the Dead Sea, will fish up this looking-glass, and we shall have archæologists divided in opinion, one half proving that it belonged to a lady of Sodom and the other half that it was the property of a gentleman of Gomorrah. Bellew was equal to the occasion. He managed to arrange his hair by looking into the back of a dessert spoon."[1] Mr. Bellew contributed a most interesting account of his journey to the East in the first number of *Temple Bar* called "Over Babylon to Baalbeck."[2] He does not, however, mention in it his travelling companion, nor any of the incidents referred to by Mr. Labouchere in his account of the same journey. Mr. Bellew subsequently joined the Church of Rome, and died in 1874.

On one of Mr. Labouchere's frequent visits to Italy, he met Dumas *père*, with whom he had an amusing adventure. Strolling into a restaurant at Genoa for breakfast, he perceived Dumas at another table, and, seated by his side, a very pretty girl, dressed like a Circassian boy, young enough to be Dumas's granddaughter. To continue the story in his own words: "Dumas told me that they had just landed from a yacht and were spending the day in Genoa. He introduced the girl to me as Émile. After luncheon he proposed that we should all take a carriage, and go and see a show villa in the neighbourhood. When we reached the villa, we were told that it was not open to the public on that day. 'Inform your master,' said Dumas to the servant, 'that Alexandre Dumas is at his door.' The servant returned, and told us that we could enter. We were ushered into a dining-room, presenting a typically Italian domestic scene. The father and mother of the family were present, and several well-grown boys and girls. Dumas was somewhat taken aback for a

[1] *Truth*, October 11, 1877.

[2] *Temple Bar*, December 1, 1860.

moment, but introduced Émile and me vaguely as '*mes enfants.*' As we were asked to sit down to coffee we made ourselves at home. Afterwards the owner showed us his garden. He and Dumas walked first. Émile and I wandered about hand-in-hand to denote our brotherly and sisterly affection. The Circassian was in a playful mood, and told me that Dumas was of a jealous disposition, which grandfathers sometimes are. He had one eye on the beauties of the garden and the other on his children. 'What are you doing?' said Dumas. I replied that I was embracing my sister. As he could not well object to this, for once, I think, I got the better of the lady's eminent grandfather." He had a story too of the younger Dumas. Labouchere was at the wedding of Mlle. Maria Dumas, and her brother, on coming to the sacristy with all the family friends for the signature of the register, looked at the document for a minute, as if perusing it carefully, and then said with mock gravity, "The accused have nothing further to add for their defence? Be it so!" And then he signed.

Mr. Labouchere's curiosity at this period of his life was insatiable. He wanted to know what it felt like to be a criminal about to be hanged. So, having procured an invitation to see all over Newgate, he carried out his experiment, and described his sensations in the columns of the *Daily News*. After giving a vivid account of the prison and some of its inmates, he wrote the following realistic lines: "And now we were led through a long stone passage open to the sky. This was the Newgate graveyard. Beneath each flag is the corpse of a murderer, and on the walls opposite are their initials, which have been cut by the warders to guide them through this murderous labyrinth. At the other end of the passage is the execution yard. The scaffold is put up the night before an execution, in a corner close by the door through which the condemned prisoner issues. The court is surrounded by high gloomy walls, and looks like the ante-chamber of Hades. I asked the warder whether in his opinion murder-

ers preferred being executed in public or private. He opined the former. 'The crowd keeps them up,' he said. 'They are not so firm, now it takes place in private.' I understand this feeling. If I were going to be hanged myself I should like the ceremony to take place *coram populo*. I should feel myself already dead in that dreary yard; and I should prefer, I imagine, after weeks or months of prison life, to have one more look at the world, even though that world were a howling mob, before quitting it for ever.

"We passed through the chapel and were shown the chair on which the prisoners condemned to death are perched —in obedience to what seems to me a barbarous custom— to hear their last sermon, and then we entered the 'Press Room.' It is a room of moderate size with plain deal tables, benches, and cupboards. One of these latter the warder opened, and showed us Jack Sheppard's chains, and other interesting relics, which are as religiously preserved as though they had belonged to saints. A leather sort of harness was also brought out. It consisted of two belts with straps attached to the lower one for the wrists. This is the murderer's last dress, and with it round him he walks to the scaffold. I tried it on, and when my hands were buckled to my side, I pictured to myself my sensations if I had been waiting to fall into the procession to the neighbouring yard. I heard my funeral bell toll; I saw the ordinary by my side; the warders telling me that my time was up; Calcraft bustling about eager to begin. So strong was the impression that I hastened to get out of the prison, and was not fully convinced that I was not going to be hanged until I found myself in the midst of a crowd in Fleet Street, who, for reasons best known to themselves, were cheering the 'Claimant,' who was issuing from a shop, while a chimney sweep who was passing by was welcomed as Bogle, being mistaken for that dusky retainer."[1]

With reference to the "Claimant," Mr. George Augustus

[1] *Daily News*, February 19, 1872.

Sala has a curious story to relate about him and Mr. Labouchere, who, of course, took the greatest interest in the famous trial. "I saw a great deal of the Claimant during 1872," says Mr. Sala, "and I remember once dining with him and the late Mr. Serjeant Ballantine at the house of Mr. Labouchere, who then resided in Bolton Street, Piccadilly. The senior member for Northampton had, upon occasion, a curious way of putting things; and over the walnuts and the wine—of which our host was not a partaker—he startled us all by coolly asking his obese guest, 'Are you Arthur Orton?' 'Good Heavens, Mr. Labouchere,' exclaimed the stout litigant, 'what do you mean?' 'Oh, nothing in particular,' quoth Mr. Labouchere; 'help yourself to some more claret.' "[1]

Mr. Labouchere however afterwards was quite convinced that the Claimant was not Orton. When the latter was released from penal servitude in 1884, he published the following reminiscence:

"It is a curious fact that during his trial the London papers sold more copies than during the Franco-Prussian War, or any other recent eventful epoch. I confess that it never was proved absolutely to my mind that he was Arthur Orton; on the other hand, whilst there was the strongest presumption that he was, he entirely failed to make out that he was Sir Roger Tichborne. I remember once during the trial, in company with Mr. G. A. Sala, passing an evening with the 'stout nobleman' at his hotel in Jermyn Street. We found him very pleasant, and he told us many tales of his existence in Australia. He certainly had a wonderful command over his features. On that last day of the civil trial, the room at the hotel was filled with adherents, many of whom were Tichborne bondholders. Suddenly the Claimant walked in. He leant against the mantelpiece, took his cigar out of his mouth, and announced the fatal news. Great was the excitement, great was the despair and

[1] G. A. Sala, *Life and Adventures*.

the indignation. But the Claimant calmly smoked on, apparently the only person in the room who had no sort of interest in the matter."[1]

Soon after Mr. Labouchere's founding of *Truth*, he became involved in several lawsuits, the most famous of which, at this period, was the one which indirectly led to his expulsion from the Beefsteak Club. He invariably commented with great wit and asperity upon his enemies, frustrated and otherwise, in the columns of his paper, and there is no doubt that its enormous popularity depended in large degree upon the fearlessness and unconventionality with which he attacked all persons of high degree and low, guilty of injustice, bullying, *snobisme*, or wilfully ignorant prejudice, who, for long, had been silently endured by their weaker brethren, for no other reason than because there had never before been a—Labby.

Sometimes he was accused by an envious press of being a liar. The title he had chosen for his paper possibly provoked the criticism. He was rather sensitive on the subject, and expressed a certain amount of annoyance whenever the well-known ditty of Sir Henry Bridges, "Labby in our Abbey," which was published in M. A. P., was mentioned.[2] In *Truth* he once produced what may be called an apposite alibi when confronted by the accusation. Some correspondent had referred rather pointedly to the existence of Lying Clubs in the last century. "There is no occasion to go back to the last century to prove the existence of Lying Clubs,"

[1] *Truth*, October 23, 1884.

[2] The first and last verses are as follows:

Of all the boys that are so smart
  There 's none like crafty Labby;
He learns the secret of each heart,
  And lives near our Abbey;
There is no lawyer in the land
  That 's half as sharp as Labby;
He is a demon in the art
  And guileless as a babby!

The ministers and members all
  Make game of truthful Labby,
Though but for him it 's said they 'd be
  A sleepy set and flabby;
And when their seven long years are out,
  They hope to bury Labby;
Ah then how peacefully he 'll lie,
  But not in our Abbey!

he wrote. "When I was at Bishop-Auckland in County Durham, a few years ago, I found a Lying Club existing and flourishing. There were different grades of proficiency. If a man could not lie at all, he was expelled. If he lied rather badly, he was given another trial. I never knew any one expelled. I was blackballed."

CHAPTER VI

THE BESIEGED RESIDENT

(Sept., 1870–Feb., 1871)

MR. LABOUCHERE was a famous *raconteur* and of the reminiscences he loved to recount there was no more riveting a series than the one relating his experiences as a journalist during the siege of Paris. According to the *Times*[1] nothing that he ever achieved in journalism or literature excelled or perhaps equalled the letters of a "Besieged Resident," which he sent from Paris to the *Daily News*, in the autumn and winter of 1870 and 1871. The correspondent of the *Daily News* in Paris at that period was the late Mr. George Morland Crawford, who had occupied the position since 1851. Mr. Crawford had already made Mr. Labouchere's acquaintance in the early sixties, when the latter was an attaché at Frankfort, and they had met again later on at Homburg. It had been the intention of Mr. Crawford to remain at his post in Paris, when an unexpected offer from Henry Labouchere to replace him temporarily caused him to alter his plans.

Mrs. Crawford has given a graphic account[2] of how Labouchere took her husband's place as correspondent. He had been in Paris with the exception of some excursions into the country for several weeks, and had invited Mr.

[1] *Times*, January 17, 1912. [2] *Truth*, January 24, 1912.

Crawford to dine with him at Durand's on the night of September 17. The party was to have included Aurélien Scholl, celebrated then as a wit, Got of the Comédie Française, Dr. Alan Herbert, and Mr. Frank Lawley. However, the uncertainty of immediate events and the general rush of departure from the capital obliged Labouchere to put off his party. He went at about six o'clock to the Café du Vaudeville to find Mr. Crawford—first to tell him that the dinner was countermanded, and then to propose to take his place as correspondent in Paris, whilst he, Mr. Crawford, should go to Tours. Mrs. Crawford happened to be with her husband at the café, and she thus describes the impression Labouchere made upon her:

"Labby looked a young man on this, to me, memorable evening, but, at the close of the siege, frightened Odo Russell by looking almost an old one. Before my husband, who was writing, introduced us he began to talk to me and I could not make him out, but at once enjoyed his company. He had a very pleasing and intelligent face, I thought spoke a little like an American (he had been escorting a party of American young ladies to Rouen), had high caste manners, but with naturalness, and much that was the reverse of that affectation of owlish wisdom or cordial dodgery then rife in the diplomatic world. I saw that he was somebody, both on his own account, and from education, and thought that he might be some Don brought up in England, who had made himself the president of a South American Republic."

As soon as Mr. Crawford had finished his writing, Labouchere broached the subject of the *Daily News*. He said: "A fancy seized me, as Sheffield (of the British Embassy) told me you had sent your little children to England, and your wife had resolved to stay through the siege and give you what help she can. It is to take your place as correspondent of the *Daily News*, and to send you into the provinces. As I am a proprietor of the paper, Robinson won't object to this arrangement. It would be an excellent thing

for my heirs were I to stop a bullet or die of starvation, but were anything of the sort to befall you it would be calamitous for you and yours. You need not leave me the six weeks' provisions which Sheffield told me you laid in, but can give them to poor neighbours. I can always get as much fresh mutton as I want from the porter of the British Embassy, who has orders to this effect. There is a flock of ewes and wethers on the grounds there, to browse on the grass and eat the hay laid in for the horses of Lord Lyons, before he had directions from Granville to go to Tours to watch events there. The only person at the Embassy is the porter. We two will have more mutton than we can eat even if the siege lasts long. The porter knows how to grow potatoes and mushrooms in an empty cellar, so that we two shall have not only meat but dainties to vary the dishes. I have arranged to have rooms at the Grand Hotel, so you see I shall be in clover."

Mrs. Crawford, who did not the least believe he was in earnest, protested that she was not at all afraid of remaining in Paris, but Labouchere persisted in his persuasions.

"If you were at all affected," he replied, "I should say, 'Don't be theatrical.' Instead of that I shall say, 'Don't be like Lot's wife.'" Then he took out his watch and explained that the last train to leave Paris between then and the end of the siege would start from the Gare St. Lazare that night at 9.40. "I advise you to go home at once," he went on, "and pack up what clothes you can for your temporary residence at the seat of the delegate government at Tours. Lyons will be glad to have you near him, for, as you can understand, he knows nothing personally of those friends of yours whom the Revolution has brought to the top."

Mrs. Crawford lost no more time in discussion, and hurried off to make her preparations in order to catch the last train by which she and her husband could get out of Paris. The 9.40 train did not leave St. Lazare that day before

midnight, and such was its weight of passengers and baggage that no fewer than three engines had to be coupled on.

The next day Mr. Labouchere sent his first letter to London, in his capacity of Paris correspondent to the *Daily News*. The mails continued to leave Paris regularly for another three days, but the chaos that prevailed in the post-office did not inspire the citizens who entrusted their correspondence to its tender care with overmuch confidence.

"Everybody was in military uniform," writes Labouchere, "everybody was shrugging his shoulders, and everybody was in the condition of a London policeman, were he to see himself marched off to prison by a street sweeper. That the Prussians should have taken the Emperor prisoner and have vanquished the French armies, had of course astonished these French bureaucrats, but that they should have ventured to interfere with postmen had perfectly dumbfounded them." Having disposed of his letter as best he might, Labouchere passed through the courtyard to try his luck with a telegram. There he saw postmen seated on the boxes of carts, with no horses before them. It was their hour to carry out the letters, and thus mechanically they fulfilled their duty. It is in touches such as these that the writer makes the scenes of the winter months of '70 and '71 live before the eyes of his readers. Were the ridiculous episodes he relates visible to others besides himself, or were his journalistic abilities so acutely developed that nothing significant, however minute, could escape his eager scrutiny? It is not easy to say, but the fact remains that he gave the world at that time, in astonishingly amusing letters, vivid pictures of bureaucracy startled into ludicrous attitudes of unaccustomed enterprise, of gilt and tinsel patriotism ineffectually trying to replace the paper courage[1] of Imperial

[1] The Emperor's plan of campaign was to mass 150,000 men at Metz; 100,000 at Strassburg, and 50,000 at the Camp at Châlons. It was then his intention to unite the armies at Metz and Strassburg, and to cross the Rhine at Maxau, to force the States of South Germany to observe neutrality. He

France—of an irresponsible populace brought face to face with a catastrophe which they imagined to be impossible up till within the last ten days of the siege.

The Parisians had undoubtedly a good excuse for the poor figure they were obliged to cut before Europe in the January of 1871. Events, which every one, except their ex-Emperor and his government, had predicted as inevitable, had followed one another with a disastrous rapidity, leaving them, after each one, *bouches béantes*, incapable of deciding whether the most appropriate gesture to express their attitude would be one of applause, of hisses, or of weeping.

Only six months had elapsed since the afternoon of the Emperor's reception, at St. Cloud, of the members of the Senate, when M. Rouher had said, during the course of his address, in words that, to-day, sound as if they *must* have been meant to be ironical: "Your Majesty has occupied the last four years in perfecting the armament and organisation of the army," and since the King of Prussia and the Sovereigns of South Germany had ordered the mobilisation of their armies. Six months! But what a six months of bloodshed and fury, of humiliation and defeat.

The Emperor left St. Cloud for the seat of war on July 28th, and went straight to Metz, where a Council of War was held on August 4, with Marshals Macmahon and Bazaine in attendance. That very day the Crown Prince of Prussia fell upon a portion of Macmahon's army corps at Weissenburg, and all but destroyed it, killing its general, Abel Douay, and taking 800 prisoners. The next day a similar fate overtook another corps, commanded by Mac-

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would then have pushed on to encounter the Prussians. But the army at Metz, instead of 150,000 men, only mustered 100,000; that of Strassburg only 40,000 instead of 100,000; whilst the corps of Marshal Canrobert had still one division at Paris, and another at Soissons; his artillery as well as his cavalry were not ready. Further no army corps was even yet completely furnished with the equipments necessary for taking the field.—*Campagne de 1870; des Causes qui ont amené la Capitulation de Sedan.* Par un Officier attaché à l'État Major-Général. Bruxelles.

mahon himself on the hills above Wörth, when 6000 men were killed or taken prisoner, and no less than thirty pieces of artillery with six mitrailleuses were captured. Whilst the latter engagement was actually in progress General Froissard's army corps, which was holding the heights above Saarbrück, was driven back in confusion and with great loss upon Metz.

The news of these events fell upon the ears of startled Europe on August 8. A fiasco, so hurried and hopeless, had not been contemplated. At first a false report had reached Paris of a grand victory won by Macmahon, who was supposed to have captured the Crown Prince of Prussia with all his army. The enthusiastic excitement had been unbounded. Gradually the truth was borne in upon the unhappy people, and a hopeless reaction was the natural result. Napoleon's apologetic telegrams from Metz did not cheer his subjects; even the fourth of a series of five containing these words, *Tout peut se rétablir*, brought little hope to their hearts, for it was impossible not to be aware of the fact that, although the war was but three weeks old, the Prussian invasion of France was going successfully and steadily forward.

But France was still an Empire, and, on the morning of August 7, the Empress-Regent presided over a ministerial council at 5 o'clock in the morning, and convoked the chambers, who met on the 9th, when the Ollivier Ministry resigned. The department of the Seine was declared in a state of siege, and a permanent council of the Ministry was established at the Tuileries. The Ollivier Ministry was replaced by one under Count Palikao.

It was still possible for news of the French defeats at the seat of war to reach the capital. Bazaine's unsuccessful movement of retreat from Metz to Verdun on August 15, followed by the bloody battle of Gravelotte, resulting in his enforced retirement into the entrenched camp of Metz, spread further consternation among the Imperial Ministers

at home, and preparations for a siege began in earnest. General Trochu was appointed Commander-in-Chief of all the forces in Paris on August 17.

Sedan was fought on the first of September, and on the second, the Emperor of the French sent his sword to the King of Prussia, who thereupon appointed him a residence as a prisoner of war. Two days later the advance guard of the Prussian army at Sedan set out for Paris.

It is to the columns of the *Daily News*,[1] that we must turn for the most authentic account of the way in which Paris took the news of Sedan. Although Labouchere was not yet the official correspondent from Paris, he nevertheless sent letters to Fleet Street dealing with matters connected with the crisis, which were published above the signature of a "Parisian Resident."

"The news of the Emperor's capture," he writes on September 4, "reached the foreign embassies here at ten yesterday morning. At about 8 o'clock it began to be rumoured that the Emperor and Macmahon's army had surrendered. I saw a crowd of about 2000 men going down the Boulevard, and shouting '*La déchéance.*' I took the arm of a patriot, and we all went together to the Louvre to interview General Trochu. He came out after we had shouted for him about half-an-hour, and a deputation had gone in to him. There was a dead silence as soon as he appeared, so what he said could be distinctly heard. He told us that the news of the capture of the Emperor was true, and that as for arms he could not give more than he had, and he regretted to say that the millions on paper were not forthcoming."

In the course of the next twenty-four hours a bloodless revolution was accomplished in Paris. On Sunday afternoon Labouchere got into a carriage and drove about the city, noting everything he saw. "The weather was beau-

[1] Quotations in this chapter not otherwise specified have been taken from the columns of the *Daily News*, August, 1870–January, 1871.

tiful," he wrote; "it was one of the most glorious early September days ever seen. I drove slowly along the quay parallel with the Orangerie of the Tuileries before the Palace. The Tuileries gardens were full of people. I learned that, in the morning, orders had been given to close the gates, but that, half-an-hour before I passed, the people had forced them open, and that neither the troops nor the people made any resistance. My coachman, who, I dare say, was an Imperialist yesterday, but was a very strong Republican to-day, pointed out to me several groups of people bearing red flags. I told him that the tricolour, betokening the presence of the Empress, still floated from the central tower of the Tuileries. While I was speaking, and at exactly twenty minutes past three, I saw that flag taken down. That is an event in a man's life not to be forgotten. Crossing over the Pont de Solferino to the Quai d'Orsay, I witnessed an extraordinary sight indeed. From the windows of those great barracks, formerly peopled with troops, every man of whom was supposed to be ready to die for his Emperor, I saw soldiers smiling, waving handkerchiefs, and responding to the cries of '*Vive la République.*' Nay, strangers fell on each other's necks and kissed each other with 'effusion.' In the neighbourhood of the Pont Neuf, I saw people on the tops of ladders busily pulling down the Emperor's bust, which the late loyalty of the people had induced them to stick about in all possible and impossible places. I saw the busts carried in mock procession to the parapets of the Pont Neuf and thrown into the Seine, clapping of hands and hearty laughter greeting the splash which the graven image of the mighty monarch made in the water. I went as far as the Hôtel de Ville, and found it in possession of his Majesty the Sovereign People. Blouses were in every one of M. Haussmann's balconies. How they got there I do not know. I presume that M. Chevreau did not invite them. But they got in somehow without violence. The great square in front of the Hôtel de Ville was full of the National Guards,

PAR BALLON MONTE

Madame Laboucher

The Holmwood

Surrey

Angleterre

Paris le 16 Xbre 187

We are getting near, I think, to the end of the siege. Each week grey day more & more to get. A few days ago, I had a slice of rats for breakfast. The balloons do not seem to succeed of late, for we hear of many which fall into the Prussian lines. Everyone is very down on the moon one day & the next day the reverse. Whether the wise men. National guards seem to care much for fighting. One who can't make up his mind whether to have a sortie or not. Dudes drive about outside with a pass. The avenues parties are like a Cattle in infernal. There is a festival calls pre gorjeux, but very few persons seem to be out. My hotel is now the central ambulance. We are 130 wounded in it. Our last news is of Nov 3. We can see the Prussian batteries on the south of the town from our lines, & we can therefore understand why they have not yet opened on the forts. Forward!!

(Opposite page 130)

Facsimile of a "Pigeon-post" letter sent by Henry Labouchere to his mother during the siege of Paris.

most of them without uniform. They carried the butts of their muskets in the air, in token that they were fraternising with the people. The most perfect good humour prevailed. Portraits of the Emperor and Empress, which many of your readers must have seen in the Hôtel de Ville ballrooms, were thrown out of the window and the people trod and danced on the canvas. On leaving the Hôtel de Ville I saw, in the Avenue Victoria, M. Henri Rochefort,[1] let out of prison as a logical sequence of events but half-an-hour before. He was on a triumphal car, and wore a scarlet scarf. He was escorted by an immense mob, crying, '*Vive Rochefort*!' He looked in far better health than I expected to see him after his long imprisonment, and his countenance beamed with delight. He had seen his desire on his enemy."

At four o'clock on the same day the Republic was proclaimed at the Hôtel de Ville, with a provisional Government composed of the following members: MM. Gambetta, Jules Favre, Pelletan, Rochefort, Jules Ferry, Jules Simon, and Ernest Picard. Kératry was appointed Prefect of the Police and Arago the Mayor of Paris.

Meanwhile the Prussians came nearer and nearer. On the 10th, they entered Laon, and General Hame, who was in command, surrendered the citadel in order to save the city. On that day the Republican Government issued an order to all owners of provisions and forage in the neighbourhood to move their goods into the capital. On the 18th the Crown Prince and the third army were at Chaumes, and two days later the long march of the Prussians was ended. The Crown Prince took up his headquarters at Versailles. The *Daily News* correspondent, Archibald Forbes, who had accompanied the third army from Wörth to Sedan, and from Sedan to Paris, informed Fleet Street that: "The fortune of war has brought the Prussians to the Hampton Court of the French capital—has placed them at the very gates of

[1] He had been undergoing a term of imprisonment for certain articles written in the *Marseillaise*.

Paris. I need say no further word to make the situation more striking. Here are the dark blue uniforms and the spiked helmets in the stately avenues of Versailles. The barracks of the Imperial Guard give ample quarters to King William's soldiery, and there have been found immense stores of hay and oats which will make the Prussian horses fat, if only rest enough be given them for feeding."

From that day until the end of the siege no regular mail went out of Paris. Balloons and pigeons carried the news of the imprisoned inhabitants into the provinces and beyond the seas. Sometimes a letter would be successfully fixed between the double soles of a crafty man's boots,[1] who would, on some pretext or another, succeed in making his way through the Prussian lines, or a note would be rolled up into a ball and be concealed in a pot of pomade and so proceed in unctuous quiet on its way out of the prison into the open. Henry Labouchere, some twenty-five years later, described how he managed to get his letters to the *Daily News*:[2]

"More of my letters reached their destination, I believe, than those of other correspondents. The reason was this. The correspondents waited on Jules Favre, and asked him to afford them facilities for sending their letters. He kindly said that he would, and told us that whenever a balloon started we might give them, made up in a parcel, to the man in charge, who would make it his business to transmit them

[1] I quote a few lines—the only legible ones—from a letter, addressed to his mother, which Labouchere sent out of Paris, fastened between the double sole of a man's boot. It looks as if the bearer must have waded through water, and the marks of the cobbler's nails are visible all over it. "November 6, 1870. This goes out in a citizen's boot. If he is caught, he will be shot, which is his affair—only you will not get it. The position is utterly hopeless. We shall be bombarded in a week. This hotel has two hundred wounded in it. I got into the Hôtel de Ville on Monday with the mob. Such a scene. I have got a pass from General Vinoy, so I get a good view of all the military operations. . . . I do not know if my letters to the D. N. arrive. . . ."

[2] J. M'Carthy and Sir J. Robinson, *The Daily News Jubilee. A Retrospect of Fifty Years of the Queen's Reign*.

to their destination so soon as the balloon touched land outside. There was a complacent smile on his countenance when we gratefully accepted this offer that led me to suspect that, whatever might happen to the letters, they were not likely to reach the newspaper offices to which they were addressed, unless they lauded everything. So, instead of falling a victim to this confidence trick, I placed my letters under cover to a friend in London, and put them into a post-box, calculating that, as each balloon took out about twenty thousand letters, those posted in the ordinary way would not be opened."

The letters, posted as Labouchere described above, were written on tissue paper and addressed to Miss Henrietta Hodson. She, immediately on receipt of the manuscript, carried it to Fleet Street, where it was rightly considered copy of the very first order.

Labouchere, as soon as the siege had really begun, tried in vain to induce General Trochu to allow him to accompany him on his rides to the ramparts of the city, pointing out that the newspaper correspondents were always allowed to accompany the Prussian staffs. Trochu would not hear of the scheme, and explained that he himself had been within an inch of being shot because he had had the impudence to say that he was the Governor of Paris.

"From Trochu," writes Labouchere, on September 25, "I went to pay a few calls. I found every one engaged in measuring the distance from the Prussian batteries to his particular house. One friend I found seated in a cellar with a quantity of mattresses over it, to make it bomb-proof. He emerged from his subterraneous Patmos to talk to me, ordered his servant to pile on a few more mattresses, and then retreated. Anything so dull as existence here it is difficult to imagine. Before the day is out one gets sick and tired of the one single topic of conversation. We are like the people at Cremorne waiting for the fireworks to begin; and I really do believe that if this continues much longer, the

most cowardly will welcome the bombs as a relief from the oppressive *ennui.*"

A letter to his mother,[1] dated September 26, gives the following account of his life in Paris: "I wrote a day or two ago by balloon, but probably my letter is in the moon. A man is going to try and get through the lines with this, and a letter to the *Daily News.* We are all right here. The Prussians fire at the forts, but as yet they have not bombarded the town. Provisions are already very dear. It is rather dull—in fact a little bombarding would be a relief to our *ennui.* Everybody is swaggering about in uniform. I went round the inner barricades a day or two ago with the citizen Rochefort."

A few days later he wrote to the *Daily News:* "The presence of the Prussians at the gates, and the sound of the cannon, have at last sobered this frivolous people. Frenchmen indeed cannot live without exaggeration, and for the last twenty-four hours they have taken to walking about as if they were guests at their own funerals. It is hardly in their line to play the *justum et tenacem* of Horace. Always acting, they are now acting the part of Spartans. It is somewhat amusing to see the stern gloom on the face of patriots one meets, who were singing and shouting a few days ago—more particularly as it is by no means difficult to distinguish beneath this outward gloom a certain keen relish, founded upon the feeling that the part is being well played."

On the evening of the same day Labouchere took his strolls abroad, and came to the Avenue de L'Impératrice, where he found a large crowd gazing upon the Fort of Mont Valérien. This fort, from being the strongest for defence, was particularly beloved by the Parisians. "They love it as a sailor loves his ship," writes Labouchere. He witnessed the following incident: "If I were near enough," said a young

[1] Mrs. Labouchere had been a widow since 1863, and was now living at Oakdene, near Dorking.

girl, "I would kiss it." "Let me carry your kiss to it," responded a Mobile, and the pair embraced, amid the cheers of the people around them.

The question of domestic economy had not yet become a pressing one, as far as the "besieged resident" was concerned. He was lodged *au quatrième* at the Grand Hotel, and wrote during the first week of the siege: "I presume if the siege lasts long enough, dogs, rats, and cats will be tariffed. I have got a thousand francs with me. It is impossible to draw upon England; consequently, I see a moment coming when, unless rats are reasonable, I shall not be able to afford myself the luxury of one oftener than once a week." And a fortnight later he writes: "My landlord presents me every week with my bill. The ceremony seems to please him, and does me no harm. I have pasted upon my mantelpiece the decree of the Government adjourning payment of rent, and the right to read and re-read this document is all that he will get from me until the end of the siege. Yesterday I ordered myself a warm suit of clothes; I chose a tailor with a German name, so I feel convinced he will not venture to ask for payment under the present circumstances, and if he does he will not get it. If my funds run out before the siege is over, I shall have at least the pleasure to think that this has not been caused by improvidence."

He wrote to his mother on October 10, as follows: "I send this by balloon. The smaller the letter, the more chance it has to go. We are all thriving in here, though we have heard absolutely nothing from the outside world for a fortnight. I don't know if my letters to the *Daily News* arrive. Yesterday, I could only get sheeps' trotters and pickled cauliflower for dinner. We boast awfully of what we are going to do, but, as yet, all our *sorties* have been driven back, and our forts stun our ears by firing upon stray rabbits and Uhlans. If ever my letters to the *Daily News* do not arrive and come back here, I shall be shot, but I don't think that they will. I am convinced that the pro-

visions will soon give out. We go about saying that we cannot be beaten, because we have made a 'pact with death.'"

And again on the 21st: "We are getting on very well here. Nothing has come in since the commencement of the siege, and no one can get out. They say there are provisions to last until February, so we shall have a dose of our own society. About one sixth of the town is now commanded by the Prussian batteries, but we don't know whether they will fire or not. I am living very well on horse and cat—the latter excellent—like rabbit, only better. Our people brag very much, but do little more. The Ultras are going ahead—they have taken now to denouncing crucifixes, which they call ridiculous nudities—a mayor has had them all removed—he then announced that no marriages were to take place in his *arrondissement*—marriage being an insult upon honourable citizens who did not approve of this relic of superstition. This was a little too much, so he was removed, and we are now free to marry or not according to our tastes. I am the intimate friend of Louis Blanc, so no one touches me."

One of the most curious things about these letters by balloon was the irregularity in their delivery. It was not merely that one balloon reached friendly or neutral territory in safety, while another did not. Of half a dozen letters coming by the same balloon, two would be delivered, say, on the 6th of the month, one on the 10th, two on the 15th, and the last on the 20th. This greatly puzzled the recipients at the time. The explanation turned out to be that the bag containing the first letter had been sent off immediately the aeronaut descended, whereas the others underwent a variety of adventures. Frequently a balloon fell at or near a place of German occupation. The aeronaut would come down at a run, hurry off with one bag, and give the others to friendly peasants, who secreted them until an opportunity occurred for getting them safely to the nearest post-town. Usually the letters came in beautiful order,

without a speck upon them to show an unusual mode of transit. One batch, however, had to be fished out of the sea, off the Cornish coast. In one case a letter was delivered in wonderfully quick time. Dispatched from Paris on a Monday night, it was delivered in London on the following evening.[1]

Apparently his "made in Germany" suit did not wear as well as might have been expected, for it was only December when he described his wardrobe as follows:

"My pea-jacket is torn and threadbare, my trousers are frayed at the bottom, and of many colours—like Joseph's coat. As for my linen, I will only say that the washerwomen have struck work, as they have no fuel. I believe my shirt was once white, but I am not sure. I invested a few weeks ago in a pair of cheap boots. They are my torment. They have split in various places, and I wear a pair of gaiters—purple, like those of a respectable ecclesiastic—to cover the rents. I bought them on the Boulevard, and at the same stall I bought a bright blue handkerchief which was going cheap; this I wear round my neck. My upper man resembles that of a dog-stealer, my lower man that of a bishop. My buttons are turning my hair grey. When I had more than one change of raiment these appendages remained in their places, now they drop off as though I were a moulting fowl. I have to pin myself together elaborately, and whenever I want to get anything out of my pocket, I have cautiously to unpin myself, with the dread of falling to pieces before my eyes."

In another place Labouchere describes his head-dress, which was quite eccentric enough to fit in with the rest of his travesty: "I have bought myself a sugar-loaf hat of the first Republic, and am consequently regarded with deference. 'The style is the man,' said Buffon; had he lived here now he would rather have said, 'The hat is the man.' An English doctor who goes about in a regulation chimney-pot has

[1] Robinson. *Fifty Years of Fleet Street.*

already been arrested twenty-seven times. I, thanks to my revolutionary hat, have not been arrested once. I have only to glance from under its brim at any one for him to quail."

The extracts which Labouchere copied from the newspapers for the benefit of his London readers are extremely amusing, and give, as no other method of narration could have done, a good idea of the spirit which the leaders of the people thought fit to try and promulgate amongst the Parisians. One morning, for instance, he learned that "Moltke is dead, that the Crown Prince is dying of a fever, that Bismarck is anxious to negotiate but is prevented by the obstinacy of the King, that three hundred Prussians from the Polish provinces have come over to our side, that the Bavarian and Würtemberg troops are in a state of incipient rebellion. From the fact that the Prussian outposts have withdrawn to a greater distance from the forts, it is probable that they despair of success, and in a few days will raise the siege. Most of the newspapers make merry over the faults in grammar in a letter which has been discovered from the Empress to the Emperor, although I doubt whether there is one Frenchman in the world who could write Spanish as well as the Empress does French."

The New Year's address to the Prussians, published in the *Gaulois*, is a masterpiece of journalistic invective, and the relish with which the besieged resident copied it for the benefit of his London readers may well be imagined:

"You Prussian beggars, you Prussian scoundrels, you bandits and you Vandals, you have taken everything from us; you have ruined us; you are starving us; you are bombarding us; and we have a right to hate you with a royal hatred. Well, perhaps one day we might have forgiven you your rapine and your murders; our towns that you have sacked; your heavy yokes; your infamous treasons. The French race is so light of heart, so kindly, that we might perhaps in time have forgotten our resentments. What we

never shall forget will be this New Year's Day, which we have been forced to pass without news from our families. You, at least, have had letters from your Gretchens, astounding letters, very likely, in which the melancholy blondes with blue eyes make a wonderful literary salad, composed of sour kraut, berlin wool, forget-me-nots, pillage, bombardment, pure love, and transcendental philosophy. But you like all this just as you like jam with your mutton. You have what pleases you. Your ugly faces receive kisses by the post. But you kill our pigeons, you intercept our letters, you shoot at our balloons with your absurd *fusils de rempart*, and you burst out into a heavy German grin when you get hold of one of our bags, which are carrying to those we love our vows, our hopes, our remembrances, our regrets, our hearts." And so on.

Labouchere had not a high opinion of French journalism during the investment. "A French journalist," he says, "even when he is not obliged to do so, generally invents his facts, and then reasons upon them with wonderful ingenuity. One would think that just at present a Parisian would do well to keep his breath to cool his own porridge. Such, however, is not his opinion. He thinks that he has a mission to guide and instruct the world, and this mission he manfully fulfils in defiance of Prussians and Prussian cannons. It is true, that he knows rather less of foreign countries than an intelligent Japanese Daimio may be supposed to know of Tipperary, but, by some curious law of nature, the less he knows of a subject, the more strongly does he feel impelled to write about it. I read a very clever article this morning pointing out that if we are not on our guard, our Empire in India will come to an end by a Russian fleet attacking it from the Caspian Sea. When one thinks how very easy it would have been for the author not to have written about the Caspian Sea, one is at once surprised and grateful to him for having called our attention to the danger which menaces us in that quarter of the globe."

His estimate of General Trochu was, on the whole, the fairest that was made at the period. During the earliest days of the siege it was supposed that Trochu had a plan, and, on being questioned about it, he admitted that he had. He went on to say that he guaranteed its success, but that he should reveal it to no one, until the right moment—in fact, he had deposited it for safety with his notary, Maître Duclos, who, in the event of his being killed, would produce it. As time wore on and no plan was forthcoming from the General, it became very evident that it could have been nothing more elaborate than a determination to capitulate as soon as Paris was starved out. When the siege was nearly five weeks old Labouchere wrote:

"Every day this siege lasts, convinces me that Gen. Trochu is not the right man in the right place. He writes long-winded letters, utters Spartan aphorisms, and complains of his colleagues, his generals, and his troops. The confidence which is felt in him is rapidly diminishing. He is a good, respectable man, without a grain of genius, or of that fierce, indomitable energy which sometimes replaces it. He would make a good minister of war in quiet times, but he is about as fit to command in the present emergency as Mr. Cardwell[1] would be. His two principal military subordinates, Vinoy and Ducrot, are excellent Generals of division, but nothing more. As for his civilian colleagues they are one and all hardly more practical than Professor Fawcett. Each has some crotchet of his own, each likes to dogmatise and to speechify, and each considers the others to be idiots, and has a small following of his own, which regards him as a species of divinity. They are philosophers, orators, and legists, but they are neither practical men nor statesmen." And when the siege was over he summed up the case for Trochu thus: "What will be the verdict of history on the defence? Who knows! On the one hand, the Parisians have kept a powerful army at bay for longer than was expected; on the

[1] Secretary of War in Mr. Gladstone's first Ministry.

other hand, every sortie that they have made has been unsuccessful—every attempt to arrest the approach of the besiegers has failed. Passively and inertly they have allowed their store of provisions to grow less and less, until they have been forced to capitulate, without their defences having been stormed, or the cannon silenced. The General complains of his soldiers, the soldiers complain of their General; and on both sides there is cause of complaint. Trochu is not a Todleben. His best friends describe him as a weak sort of military Hamlet, wise of speech, but weak and hesitating in action—making plans and then criticising them, instead of accomplishing them. As a commander his task was a difficult one; when the siege commenced he had no army; when the army was formed it was encompassed by earthworks and redoubts so strong that even better soldiers would have failed to carry them. As a statesman, he never was master of the situation. He followed rather than led public opinion. Success is the criterion of ability in this country, and poor Trochu is as politically dead as though he never had lived."

As time wore on the question of meals in the besieged city naturally became one of absorbing moment. "I went," says Labouchere, on December 21, "to see what was going on in the house of a friend of mine, in the Avenue de L'Impératrice, who has left Paris. The servant who was in charge told me that up there they had not been able to obtain bread for three days, and that the last time he had presented his ticket, he had been given about half an inch of cheese. 'How do you live then?' I asked. After looking mysteriously round to see that no one was watching us, he took me down into the cellar, and pointed to some meat in a barrel. 'It is half a horse,' he said, in the tone of a man who is showing some one the corpse of his murdered victim. 'A neighbouring coachman killed him, and we salted him down, and divided him.' Then he opened a closet in which sat a huge cat. 'I am fattening her up for Christmas day;

we mean to serve her up, surrounded with mice like sausages,' he observed." On January 6 Labouchere notes: "Yesterday I had a slice of Pollux for dinner. Pollux and his brother Castor are two elephants, which have been killed. It was tough, coarse, and oily, and I do not recommend English families to eat elephant as long as they can get beef or mutton. Many of the restaurants are closed, owing to want of fuel. They are recommended to use lamps; but although French cooks can do wonders with very poor materials, when they are called upon to cook an elephant with a spirit lamp the thing is almost beyond their ingenuity. Castor and Pollux's trunks sold for forty-five francs a pound; the other parts of the interesting twins fetched about ten francs a pound."

He wrote to his mother on January 8[1]: "Here we still are. For the last few days the Prussians have taken to throwing shells into the town, which makes things more lively. I do not think it can last much longer. It is awfully cold, for all the wood is freshly cut and will not burn. The washerwomen have struck as they have no fuel, so we all wear very dirty shirts. I am in a great fright of my money giving out, as none is to be got here. My dress is seedy—in fact falling to pieces. I think I have eaten now of every animal which Noah had in his ark.[2] Since the bombardment the cannon makes a great noise. All night it is as if doors were slamming. Outside the walls it is rather pretty to see the batteries exchanging shots. We have heard nothing from England since September, except from scraps of paper picked out of dead Prussians' pockets." Labouchere was always ready to recall to his memory for conversational purposes the strange food he ate during the siege

[1] This letter did not reach London, E. C., from whence it was posted to Dorking, until Jan. 19.

[2] Captain Bingham notes in his diary for Dec. 4 that Henry Labouchere, Frank Lawley, Lewis Wingfield, and Quested Lynch dined with him, and that they partook of *moufflon*, a kind of wild sheep which inhabits Corsica.—*Recollections of Paris*, Capt. Hon. D. Bingham.

of Paris. Donkey apparently was his favourite dish. This is what he said on the subject:

"A donkey is infinitely better eating than beef or mutton, indeed I do not know any meat which is better. This was so soon discovered by the French, during the siege of Paris, that donkey meat was about five times the price of horse meat. At Voisin's there was almost every day a joint of cold donkey for breakfast, and it was greatly preferred to anything else. Let any one who doubts the excellence of cold donkey slay one of these weak-minded animals, cook him, and eat him." Rats he did not appreciate so much: "The objection to them is that when cooked their flesh is gritty. This objection is, however, somewhat Epicurean, for, except for this grittiness, they are a wholesome and excellent article of food. I am surprised that there is not a society for the promotion of eating rats. Why should not prisoners be fed with these nourishing and prolific little animals?"

His account of how he got a leg of mutton into Paris after the capitulation, when, in spite of the siege being raised, the difficulties of procuring food were almost as insurmountable as before, was one of his most amusing *contes*. He rode out to Versailles,[1] where he procured the longed-for joint, but, when he started on his return journey, a sentinel of Versailles refused to allow the meat to leave the town, and actually took it away from him. Desperately he decided to appeal to the better side of the Prussian's nature, and explained to him that he was in love, indeed, that to love was the fate of all mortals. The warrior sighed and pensively assented: Labouchere judged that he was most likely thinking of his distant Gretchen, and shamelessly followed up his advantage: "My lady love is in Paris,"

[1] "As soon as the armistice was signed, several of the English correspondents managed to get to Versailles. The first thing that Labouchere did on arriving there was to plunge his head into a pail of milk, and he was with difficulty weaned."—*Recollections of Paris*, Capt. Hon. D. Bingham.

he proceeded pathetically, "long have I sighed in vain. I am taking her now a leg of mutton—on this leg hangs all my hope of bliss—if I present myself to her with this token of my devotion she may yield to my suit. Oh, full of feeling, beloved of beauteous women, German warrior, can you refuse me?" Of course the sentinel yielded, and the correspondent, who, needless to say, had no lady love in the capital, bore it off in triumph. He enjoyed it for dinner that evening in company with Mr. Frank Lawley and Mr. Denis Bingham, in whose journal for that day occurs the following entry:

"On their return from Versailles together, Labouchere and Lawley brought me a leg of mutton. And what a treat it was for our small household and dear neighbours! And an Italian lady brought us a large loaf of white bread, and we feasted and were merry, and measured our girths, and promised ourselves that we would soon get into condition again, for we were lamentably pulled down."[1]

On February 10, Labouchere took his departure from Paris, feeling, as he said, much as Daniel must have done on emerging from the den of lions. Baron Rothschild procured for him a pass which enabled him to take the Amiens train at the goods station within the walls of the city, instead of driving, as those who were less fortunate were obliged to do, to Gonesse. The train was drawn up before a shed in the midst of oceans of mud. It consisted of one passenger carriage, and of a long series of empty bullock vans. He entered one of the latter as the passenger van was already crowded. At Breteuil the train waited for above an hour, and Labouchere, impatient of the delay, perceiving a Prussian train puffing up, managed to induce an official to allow him to get into the luggage van, by which means he was able to proceed on his way to the destination. "Having started from Paris as a bullock, I reached Amiens at twelve o'clock as a carpet-bag," was the way he described his journey.

[1] Capt. Hon. D. Bingham. *Recollections of Paris.*

At Abbeville the train passed out of the Prussian lines into the French, and Calais was reached at 7 P.M. "Right glad" was the Paris correspondent, to use his own words, to "eat a Calais supper and to sleep on a Calais bed."[1]

In his last letter to the *Daily News* during the war, Mr. Labouchere lodged one other Parthian shot in the city whose hospitality he had been enjoying: "I took my departure from Paris," he wrote, "leaving without any very poignant regret, its inhabitants wending their way to the electoral 'urns,' the many revolving in their minds how France and Paris are to manage to pay the little bill which their creditor outside is making up against them; the few—the very few—determined to die rather than yield, sitting in the cafés on the boulevard, which is to be, I presume, their last ditch."

In one of his earliest numbers of *Truth*, Mr. Labouchere gave a characteristic account of how he behaved under fire. It is worth quoting as illustrative of the naïve frankness with which he always described those instinctive little actions of human nature which more sophisticated persons usually pretend never occur. "I was at some of the engagements during the Franco-Prussian War. The first time that I was under fire, I felt that every shell whizzing through the air would infallibly blow me up. Being a non-combatant, in an unconcerned sort of way, as if I had business to attend to elsewhere, I effected a strategical movement to the rear. But, as no shell had blown me up, I came to the conclusion that no shell would blow me up, and accepted afterwards as a natural state of things which did not concern me, the fact that these missiles occasionally blew up other people."

[1] The following gentlemen of the press were in Paris during the siege: Charles Austen of the *Times*, Frank Lawley of the *Daily Telegraph*, Henry Labouchere of the *Daily News*, Thomas Gibson Bowles of the *Morning Post*, J. Augustus O'Shea of the *Standard*, Capt. Bingham, who sent letters to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and Mr. Dallas, who wrote both for the *Times* and the *Daily News*.

CHAPTER VII

LABOUCHERE AND BRADLAUGH

(1880–1881)

AT the general election of 1880, Mr. Labouchere found in the electors of Northampton a constituency which was to remain faithful to him throughout his political career. He was described in the local press as the "nominee of the moderate Liberals," though, as he explained in the columns of *Truth*, a moderate Liberal at Northampton was a Radical anywhere else. The "Radical" candidate was that upright and greatly persecuted man, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, who merited far more than Mr. Labouchere the title of the "religious member for Northampton."[1] It has often been pointed out that the difference between religious and irreligious people does not lie so much in opinion as in temperament. Labouchere had an essentially irreligious nature, he was a born *impie*, as the French say: Mr. Bradlaugh had the soul of a Covenanter. As far as speculative religious opinions were concerned, they practically coincided, while, in the general lines of political opinion, they were quite at one. Both were strong Radicals and strong anti-socialists.

Northampton was in 1880 one of the most promising Radical constituencies.[2] The Radical element had for

[1] The late Lord Randolph Churchill once referred in the House of Commons to Mr. Labouchere (greatly to his delight) by this title.

[2] I have followed in this chapter the admirable account of Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle given by Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P., in the second part of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh: Life and Work.*

many years been very numerous among the population, but unfortunately the majority of the workers had no vote. The Household Suffrage Act of 1868 remedied this state of things to some extent. The work of the Freehold Land Society developed the scope of the remedy. This most practical expression of democratic ideals, by making freeholders of workmen, raised the numbers of the electorate from 6829 in 1874 to 8189 in 1880; of these 2500 had never voted before, and to a man were Radicals. When Mr. Labouchere was introduced as Liberal candidate he at once decided to make common cause with Mr. Bradlaugh, and his manifesto to the electors, published on March 27, was craftily worded so as to appeal with simple directness to those modern sons of St. Crispin, "the communistic cobblers of Northampton." It ran as follows: "Having already sat in Parliament as a Liberal member for Middlesex, it is needless for me to say that I am an opponent of the Imperialism which, under the leadership of the Earl of Beaconsfield, has become the policy of the Conservative Government. This new-fangled political creed consists in swagger abroad and inaction at home. Its results are that we have made ourselves the patrons of one of the vilest governments that ever burdened the earth; that we have joined with the oppressors against the oppressed; that we have acquired a pestiferous and less than worthless land in the Mediterranean; that we have annexed the territory of some harmless Dutch republicans against their will; that we have expended above six millions in catching a savage, who had as much right to his freedom as we have, and that we have butchered Afghans for the crime of defending their country against an unjust invasion. . . . For my part, I am anxious to see Parliament again controlling the executive, and a majority of members returned who will radically revise the laws regarding land, so as to encourage its tenure by the many instead of its absorption by the few, who will render farmers independent of the caprices of the landlords, who will eman-

cipate the agricultural labourers by securing to them their natural right to vote." He went on to express in strong terms his desire for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England.[1] In a speech which he made on the same day as the publication of his manifesto, in the Wesleyan Chapel, in the Wellingborough Road, he said that he had been asked a little while ago whether he was a member of the Church of England, and he had replied that he had been brought up in the Church of England, and, if he had to register his religion, he should register it as a member of the Church of England. But, if he had been asked what his religion was, he should have said the question was one between his God and his conscience, and it was no business of any one's in Northampton, because he stood upon the distinct issue that, whatever the religious opinions of a candidate might be, they were sending him to Parliament to perform certain political duties, and if his political views were in accordance with theirs, religion had nothing to do with it.[2]

The borough had previously returned two Tory members, Mr. Phipps, a local brewer, and Mr. Merewether, a lawyer. They were not themselves very formidable opponents to the Radical joint candidature. The clergy and the press urged the theological motive, as well as his greatly misunderstood views on Malthusianism against Bradlaugh. On the Sunday before the election the Vicar of St. Giles intimated that "to those noble men who loved Christ more than party, Jesus would say, 'Well done.'" But, in spite of nearly 2000 years of Christianity, heaven has not yet learned to bless the weaker cause, and on the election day, the figures stood—Labouchere (L.), 4518, Bradlaugh (R.), 3827, Phipps (C.), 3125, Merewether (C.), 2826. When the news of the poll was brought to Mr. Labouchere, who was smoking his cigarette in the coffee room of the hotel where he was staying, his only comment was a quiet chuckle, and the remark, "Oh, they 've swallowed Bradlaugh, after all, have they?"

[1] *Northampton Mercury*, March 27, 1880. [2] *Ibid.*

Great was the fury in the Conservative camp. "The bellowing blasphemer of Northampton," as Mr. Bradlaugh was amiably called by the *Sheffield Telegraph*, had to meet the full blast of popular prejudice, which was exploited to the utmost by his political opponents.

The Tories were soon to have more than popular prejudice to exploit. On May 3, Mr. Bradlaugh, before taking his seat in the House of Commons, handed to Sir Thomas Erskine May, the Clerk of the House, the following statement:

To

THE RIGHT HONBLE. THE SPEAKER.

I, the undersigned, Charles Bradlaugh, beg respectfully to claim to be allowed to affirm as a person for the time being by law permitted to make a solemn affirmation or declaration, instead of taking an oath.

On being invited by the Speaker (Sir Henry Brand) to make a statement to the House with regard to his claim, he replied:

Mr. Speaker, I have only now to submit that the Parliamentary Oaths Act, 1866, gives the right to affirm to every person for the time being permitted to make affirmation. I am such a person; and under the Evidence Amendment Act, 1869, and the Evidence Amendment Act, 1870, I have repeatedly for nine years past affirmed in the highest courts of jurisdiction in this realm. I am ready to make the declaration or affirmation of allegiance.

It might have been thought that the principle of Mr. Bradlaugh's position needed only to be stated to be accepted by men of honourable feeling and average intelligence. After all, as Mr. Labouchere, in course of conversation on this very point, once remarked to me: "a statement is either true or false, and expletives cannot affect it." The legal precedents, invoked, although they did not actually mention

the parliamentary oath, had been considered sufficient by the last Liberal law officers. Sir Henry Brand, however, had "grave doubts," and desired to refer the claim to the House's judgment. Lord Frederick Cavendish, on behalf of the Treasury Bench, seconded by Sir Stafford Northcote, the leader of the Opposition, moved that the point be referred to a Select Committee. Lord Percy and Mr. David Onslow attempted in vain to adjourn the debate.

On May 10, Lord Richard Grosvenor, the Government Whip, announced the names of the proposed Committee: Mr. Whitbread, Sir J. Holker, Mr. John Bright, Lord Henry Lennox, Mr. W. H. Massey, Mr. Staveley Hill, Sir Henry Jackson, Sir Henry James (the Attorney-General), Mr. Farrer Herschell (the Solicitor-General), Sir G. Goldney, Mr. Grantham, Mr. Pemberton, Mr. Watkin Williams, Mr. Spencer Walpole, Mr. Hopwood, Mr. Beresford Hope, Major Nolan, Mr. Chaplin, and Mr. Serjeant Simon. In spite of the fact that the actual motion was not to come on till the next day, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff endeavoured at once to raise a debate on the legitimacy of the Committee, and the next day succeeded in doing so. The debate was characterised by "great violence and recklessness," but the Government succeeded in getting their Committee appointed by a majority of seventy-four. The report of the Committee was presented on May 20. Eight members were in favour of Mr. Bradlaugh's right to affirm, and eight members against: Mr. Spencer Walpole, the Chairman, took the responsibility of giving his casting vote for the Noes. All the Noes with the exception of Mr. Hopwood were Conservatives, the rest of the Liberals voting on the affirmative side. Bradlaugh now claimed the right to take the oath, as the right to affirm was denied him.

There has been so much misunderstanding of Bradlaugh's position on this point that it may be well to explain exactly what it was that he did claim. In a statement of his case subsequently published in his paper, *The National Reformer*,

on May 30, 1889, Mr. Bradlaugh used the following words: "My duty to my constituents is to fulfil the mandate they have given me, and if, to do this, I have to submit to a form less solemn to me than the affirmation I would have reverently made, so much the worse for those who force me to repeat words which I have scores of times declared are to me sounds conveying no clear and definite meaning. I am sorry for the earnest believers who see words sacred to them used as a meaningless addendum to a promise, but I cannot permit their less sincere co-religionists to use an idle form, in order to prevent me from doing my duty to those who have chosen me to speak for them in Parliament. *I shall, taking the oath, regard myself, as bound, not by the letter of its words, but by the spirit which the affirmation would have conveyed had I been permitted to use it.* So soon as I am able, I shall take such steps as may be consistent with parliamentary business to put an end to the present doubtful and unfortunate state of the law and practice on oaths and affirmations."

The words italicised indicate very clearly the spirit in which Mr. Bradlaugh proposed to take the oath. To do so, was, as he conceived, the only way, since the adverse decision of the Committee on his claim to affirm, by which he could qualify himself for the performance of his duty to his constituents. It was in no sense intended as an insult to those to whom the oath had a distinct and positive religious value, or as a defiance of the dignity or orders of the House. This document was dated May 30, the day on which the report of the Committee was issued, and on the following day, Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself to take the oath and his seat.

Sir Henry Drummond Wolff at once rose and objected to the administration of the oath, and, on the Speaker's allowing his objection, proceeded to make a remarkable speech. For flippancy of tone and sheer ineptitude of argument, not to speak of the crass and brutal quality of

the prejudice which inspired it, this deliverance possesses an unenviable pre-eminence among the many absurdities uttered by honourable members during the Bradlaugh parliamentary struggle. Wolff's argument rested on two grounds, both palpably false, while the second was entirely irrelevant to the point at issue. He maintained that Atheists who had made affirmations in courts of law (as Mr. Bradlaugh had done) thereby admitted that an oath "would not be binding on their conscience," and, furthermore, that Bradlaugh had stated, in his "Impeachment of the House of Brunswick," that "Parliament has the undoubted right to withhold the crown from Albert Edward, Prince of Wales." Sir Henry "could not see how a gentleman professing the views set forth in that work could take the oath of allegiance." He went on to say: "What we have now before us is the distinct negation of anything like perpetual morality or conscience, or the existence of God. And, as I believe that a person holding these views cannot be allowed to take the oath in this House, I beg to move my resolution." Mr. R. N. Forster seconded. Mr. Gladstone at once rose and, while refraining from expressing any personal opinion, suggested reference to a Select Committee. Sir Henry James supported the Prime Minister's amendment. Mr. Labouchere, speaking as the colleague of the honourable member in the representation of Northampton, said that he thought it right to state that his honourable friend was selected by the majority of the constituents solely on account of his political views. They did not occupy themselves with his religious convictions, because they were under the impression that they were giving him political, rather than theological, functions to fulfil in that House. A proposal had been made by the Prime Minister that this matter should be referred to a Select Committee. It certainly did appear to him (Mr. Labouchere) somewhat strange that a member who had been duly elected should be told that he could not take his seat because he was forbidden to make an affirmation on

account of his not being a Quaker or a Moravian, and because he was forbidden from taking the oath on account of certain speculative religious opinions, which he had professed. But that appeared to be the view of many gentlemen on the other side of the House, and he should be perfectly ready to discuss that view; but, as the Prime Minister had very rightly said, the matter was a judicial one, and it would be far better, in his humble opinion, that it should be referred to a Committee of the House to look at it in its judicial aspect rather than that there should be an acrimonious theological discussion in that House. When, however, it was referred to a Committee, he thought that he had a right to ask, in the name of his constituents, that that Committee should decide it as soon as possible. Should the Committee decide that the honourable gentleman was not to be allowed to take the oath, it would then become, if not his duty, the duty of some other honourable gentleman to bring in a bill to enable his colleague to make an affirmation in order that his constituents might enjoy the right which the constitution gave them of being represented by two members in that House.

Lord Percy drily observed that he was sorry for the electors of Northampton if they were deprived of the services of one of their representatives, because the honourable gentleman was recommended to them by his honourable colleague, whose religious opinions were well known, and, after an eloquent speech from Mr. Bright, who recommended "the statesmanlike and judicious course which has been suggested to us by the First Minister of the Crown," the debate was adjourned.

On the resumption of the debate the next day, the wildest remarks were made by Mr. Bradlaugh's opponents. Dr. Lyons proposed the solution that "Northampton should send us a God-fearing if not a God-loving man." Mr. Warton argued that "the man who does not fear God cannot honour the King," and Mr. Callan scoffed at Mr. Bright's tribute of respect to Mr. Bradlaugh's sense of honour and

conscience, "language," he said, "that should not be used with reference to an infidel blasphemer." After the din caused by this *ex parte* criticism had subsided, the still small voice of Mr. Labouchere was heard mildly asking whether the honourable member was in order in referring to his colleague as an infidel blasphemer, and the Speaker having ruled the phrase out of order, Mr. Callan withdrew it. He was, however, an ardent polemist, and added that he was sure that Mr. Labouchere, in spite of his support of Mr. Bradlaugh, "would prefer in this House his old acquaintance Lambri Pasha to the gentleman who was the subject of the debate." And so the foolish wrangle went on, recalling the historian's account of the Œcumenical Council. It is true that the amateur theologians of Westminster stopped short of pulling each other's beards. Their zeal had not quite the professional note of that of the Fathers at Ephesus.

After two days of this sort of thing, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's motion was rejected by 289 votes to 219, and a second Select Committee of twenty-three was appointed. The members were: the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, Messrs. Bright, Chaplin, Childers, Sir Richard Cross, Mr. Gibson, Sir Gabriel Goldney, Mr. Grantham, Mr. Staveley Hill, Sir John Holker, Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Hopwood, Sir Henry Jackson, Lord Henry Lennox, Mr. Massey, Major Nolan, Messrs. Pemberton, Simon, Trevelyan, Walpole, Whitbread, and Watkin Williams.

The Committee reported that Bradlaugh by simply stating (though in answer to official question) that he had repeatedly affirmed under certain Acts in courts of law, had brought it to the notice of the House that he was a person as to whom judges had satisfied themselves that an oath was not binding on his conscience; that, under the circumstances, an oath taken by him would not be an oath within the true meaning of the statutes; and that the House therefore could, and ought, to prevent him from going through the form. The Committee further suggested that he should be allowed

to affirm with a view to his right to do so being tested by legal action, pointing to the nearly equal balance of votes in the former Committee as a reason for desiring a decisive legal solution.

On June 21, Mr. Labouchere moved "that Mr. Bradlaugh, member for the borough of Northampton, be admitted to make an affirmation or declaration instead of the oath required by law." This speech was one of the best he ever made in the House. It was an admirable piece of argument and an excellent piece of literature, solidly reasoned and witty; "it is contrary to, it is repugnant to, the feelings of all men of tolerant minds that any gentleman should be hindered from performing civil functions in this world on account of speculative opinions about another"—was a terse summing up of the situation worthy of Gibbon. His main argument was that the Parliamentary Oaths Act of 1866 gave to all persons, legally entitled to affirm in the law courts, the right to affirm in Parliament. He further pointed out that the refusal to allow Bradlaugh to affirm would be to turn him into a martyr. Mr. Bright again made a fine speech in which he said, amid ironical cheers from the Opposition, that he pretended to no conscience and honour superior to the conscience of Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Gladstone also spoke cogently in favour of Mr. Labouchere's motion. It was, however, lost by a majority of 45, of whom 5 were English Liberals and 31 Irish Home Rulers.

On June 23, Mr. Bradlaugh again presented himself at the table of the House. The Speaker called on him to withdraw, in accordance with the vote of the night before. Mr. Labouchere then moved that "Mr. Bradlaugh be now heard at the Bar of the House," following which motion Mr. Bradlaugh made an eloquent and dignified defence of his position. A confused debate followed, and Mr. Labouchere moved that "Yesterday's decision be rescinded," withdrawing his motion, however, on an appeal from Mr. Gladstone. The Speaker then recalled Bradlaugh to the table,

and informed him that the House had nothing to say to him beyond once more calling upon him to withdraw. Bradlaugh replied: "I beg respectfully to insist on my right as a duly elected member for Northampton. I ask you to have the oath administered to me in order that I may take my seat, and I respectfully refuse to withdraw." After a second admonition from the Speaker, to which Bradlaugh replied, "With respect I do refuse to obey the orders of the House, which are against the law," the House was appealed to "to give authority to the Chair to compel execution of its orders." Mr. Gladstone, although called upon, did not rise. He appeared to be absorbed in deep thought, and, with his gaze fixed on a vague distance, just above the heads of the belligerent theologians, he meditatively twirled his thumbs. Northcote hesitatingly moved, "though I am not quite sure what the terms of the motion should be, that Mr. Speaker do take the necessary steps for requiring and enforcing the withdrawal of the honourable member for Northampton." The Speaker explained that the motion should simply be "that the honourable member do now withdraw." On a division being taken, 326 voted in favour of the motion and only 38 against. On the Speaker renewing his order, Mr. Bradlaugh answered: "With submission to you, Sir, the order of the House is against the law, and I respectfully refuse to obey it." The Sergeant-at-Arms was now called, and touching him on the shoulder, requested him to withdraw. Mr. Bradlaugh said: "I will submit to the Sergeant-at-Arms removing me below the Bar, but I shall immediately return to the table," and did so, saying as he returned toward the table, "I claim my right as a member of this House." This little ceremony was repeated twice, the House being in an uproar. High above the din, Mr. Bradlaugh's voice could be heard shouting: "I claim my right as a member of this House. I admit the right of the House to imprison me, but I admit no right on the part of the House to exclude me, and I refuse to be excluded." He was again led to

the Bar by the Sergeant-at-Arms to await the House's action.

Mr. Bradlaugh had, no doubt not unintentionally, indicated to his enemies the only line they could take. It was his tactic, and a wise one, to force the House into the extreme measure of physical force. To do so was a fair retort from a Rationalist to his opponents. Northcote, complaining again of Mr. Gladstone's inaction, proceeded to move that "Mr. Bradlaugh, having defied the authority of the House, be taken into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms." Mr. Labouchere at once rose and said that he would not oppose the resolution, although he thought it a somewhat strange thing that a citizen of this country should be sent to prison for doing what eminent legal gentlemen on his side and an eminent legal gentleman on the other side of the House said he had a perfect right to do. He was interrupted by cries of "No, No!" He continued that he did not know whether honourable members opposite meant to say that the honourable and learned gentleman, the late Attorney-General, was not an eminent legal authority on such a point. That was the view taken by that honourable and learned gentleman. It seemed a somewhat hard thing that any one should be put into prison for doing what a general consensus of legal opinion in that House held to be his duty and his right. But, as the Prime Minister had stated, it was useless to oppose the motion, because Mr. Bradlaugh had come into conflict with a resolution of the House, whether that resolution were right or wrong. He, regretting as he did the necessity that had been forced upon the House, did not think he should be serving any good purpose in opposing the resolution, or in asking the House to go into a vote on this question. He believed himself that the sending of Mr. Bradlaugh into custody would be the first step towards his becoming a recognised member of the House. It is interesting to note that Mr. Parnell also spoke in favour of Mr. Bradlaugh, and said that, if Irish members voted for his imprisonment,

they would be going contrary to the feeling of their country. On a division being taken there were 274 Ayes to 7 Noes, and Mr. Bradlaugh was removed in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms to the Clock Tower.

The imprisonment was rather an insult than an injury. The prisoner received his friends freely and openly, and proceeded to the business of fighting his battle in the country from his "cell." A cry of indignation, which must have greatly surprised the Tories, went up all over England, and, on the next day, Northcote, at the urgent advice, it is said, of Lord Beaconsfield, moved for Bradlaugh's immediate and unconditional release. On Sir Stafford making his motion, Mr. Labouchere pointed out to the House, "in order that there may be no misconception in the matter," that Mr. Bradlaugh would immediately on his release "return to the House and do what the Prime Minister, the colleagues of the Prime Minister, the present Attorney-General and the late Attorney-General, say he has an absolute legal right to do." The motion was nevertheless agreed to, and Mr. Bradlaugh was released.

The next day, June 25, Mr. Labouchere gave notice that he should move on the following Tuesday that the resolution of the House, which had resulted in Mr. Bradlaugh's imprisonment, should be read and rescinded. He also asked for special facilities from the Government on that day for bringing the matter before the House. Mr. Gladstone, whilst reserving his answer as to the particular form of proceeding, agreed that "it was certainly requisite and necessary that the subject of Mr. Bradlaugh's right should be considered," and promised facilities for the day mentioned by Mr. Labouchere. On the Monday, however, Mr. Gladstone himself informed the House that the Government had framed the following resolution, which they intended to submit: "That every person returned as a member of this House, who may claim to be a person for the time being by law permitted to make a solemn affirmation or

declaration instead of taking an oath, shall, henceforth (notwithstanding so much of the resolution adopted by this House on the 22d of June last, as relates to affirmation), be permitted without question to make and subscribe a solemn affirmation in the form prescribed by the Parliamentary Oaths Act, 1866, as altered by the Promissory Oaths Act, 1868, subject to any liability by Statute; and, secondly, that this resolution be a standing Order of this House." The Prime Minister then expressed the hope that, as the question would be raised in what the Government considered the most convenient manner, Mr. Labouchere would not consider it necessary to proceed with any motion on the following day. Mr. Labouchere withdrew his resolution "after the very satisfactory Notice, which has just been given by the Prime Minister."

The next day, when Mr. Gladstone made his motion, Sir John Gorst opposed it, on the technical ground that it was a breach of the Rule of the House, which laid down that, if a question had been considered by the House and a definite judgment pronounced, the same, or what was substantially the same, question could not be put again to the House during the same session. This contention was, however, overruled by the Speaker, and, on a division being taken, the Prime Minister's resolution was accepted by a majority of 54, the Ayes numbering 303 and the Noes 249. Bradlaugh was now free to affirm at his own legal risk, and he did so the next day, thus bringing to a conclusion the first movement of this ironic symphony.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Labouchere's great speech of June 21 contributed powerfully to this result. Apart from the speeches of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, and indeed Mr. Bradlaugh's own fine speech at the Bar of the House on June 23, it was the only attempt made to present the constitutional and legal aspects of Bradlaugh's case in their true light. The subject was one that appealed very strongly to Mr. Labouchere. In personal agreement

with the views which it was sought to penalise in the person of Mr. Bradlaugh (although it would have been alien to his temperament to have enrolled himself as a partisan of those views), his attack on Mr. Bradlaugh's enemies acquired weight and energy from the love of individual liberty that was at the bottom of his character, and his detestation, on that, as on every other occasion of his public life, of oppression and prejudice.

The prejudice aroused by Bradlaugh's entrance into the House of Commons was slow to disperse. Numerous petitions for his exclusion from Parliament were signed, in some cases, *en bloc*, by Sunday-school children. The varieties of English Protestantism were all zealous in the good cause, and Cardinal Manning, who wrote a violent article in the *Nineteenth Century* on the subject, succeeded in presenting a monster petition from English and exiled Irish Roman Catholics. There were, however, some notable exceptions among those who represented the religious principle. Several clergymen of the Church of England and not a few Nonconformist ministers wrote to the papers on his behalf. Newman refused to sign the petition, on constitutional grounds, and the "Home Government Association of Glasgow" sent to Bradlaugh a resolution stating "that this meeting of Irish Roman Catholics . . . most emphatically condemns the spirit of domination and intolerance arrayed against you, and views with astonishment and indignation the cowardly acquiescence and, in a few instances, active support, on the part of a large majority of the Irish Home Rule members to the policy of oppression exercised against you." Such voices were, however, few and far between; in the House itself the Opposition could not resist the temptation of such a weapon against the Government. It was good policy, as Lord Henry Lennox said, in a moment of expansion, "to put that damned Bradlaugh on them." Mr. Labouchere held an unswerving course in support of his colleague. Temperamentally, as has been said, he did not

sympathise with Mr. Bradlaugh's attitude. He did not share Mr. Bradlaugh's view of the importance of transcendental opinions of any shade, and his wider experience of life and human nature led him to gauge more truly perhaps, certainly very differently, the value in the social scheme of other people's religious belief. He would never himself have raised the question raised by Mr. Bradlaugh, but he was wise enough to realise that, once it was raised, there was only one way of settling it. In the course of his long life, he championed many a victim of oppression and prejudice, but it may be doubted whether his championship ever showed to greater advantage, was ever more firmly based on those wide views of justice which underlie genuine political sagacity, and distinguish the true statesman from the mere politician, than in the case of Mr. Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle.

The venue of that struggle was shortly transferred to the law courts. Bradlaugh had affirmed and taken his seat at his own legal risk. During the five months in which Parliament sat between July, 1880, and March, 1881, he was one of the most assiduous and energetic members of the House. On March 7, the action of one Clarke *v.* Bradlaugh came on the Court of Queen's Bench before Mr. Justice Matthew. On the 11th the judge delivered his judgment, which was against the defendant. He said that the Parliamentary Oaths Act, cited in his favour by Bradlaugh, only permitted affirmation to persons holding religious beliefs. On judgment being delivered against him, Bradlaugh applied for a stay of execution of costs, with view to an appeal, which was granted, the judge consenting to stay his verdict for the opinion of the Court of Appeal to be taken. The appeal was heard on March 30 by Lord Justices Bramwell, Lush, and Baggallay, but their decision was again adverse to the defendant. The point taken was not, as Mr. Labouchere had argued before the House, the actual grammatical meaning of the wording of the Act, but

the intention of the framers of the Act. Their Lordships held that it had only been intended to emancipate persons possessed of positive religious beliefs rendering the taking of an oath repugnant to their consciences. This rendered the second seat for Northampton vacant. On April 1 Mr. Labouchere, in the course of moving for a new writ for the borough of Northampton, said that a decision had now been given against Bradlaugh by three judges, and, in all probability, the House of Lords would decide against him. He was authorised by Mr. Bradlaugh to say that he fully accepted the law as laid down by the Court of Appeal, and that it was not fair that Northampton should have one member only—the election might be got over by the Easter holidays, and honourable and right honourable gentlemen would have an opportunity of considering what course they would take should Mr. Bradlaugh be re-elected. The writ was issued, and Mr. Bradlaugh was, as Mr. Labouchere had predicted, re-elected on April 9. Mr. Labouchere made a speech at Northampton, before the election, in defence of his colleague, the interest of which was wider than that of the Bradlaugh controversy on account of one statement in it. He described his leave-taking of Mr. Gladstone, on his departure from London, in these words: "And, men of Northampton, that grand old man said to me, as he patted me on the shoulder, 'Henry my boy, bring him back, bring him back!'" I think Mr. Labouchere's autobiographical Muse used a poetic license here. It is certainly difficult to imagine Mr. Gladstone patting the member for Northampton on the back, and calling him "Henry, my boy." The success of this allusion to the Prime Minister, however, was enormous, and the name stuck. Mr. Gladstone was the "Grand Old Man" for the rest of his life.

As every one knows, Bradlaugh again was not allowed to take his seat. That his attitude caused embarrassment to the Liberal party cannot be denied. At the end of June, he wrote to Mr. Labouchere on the subject of forcing another

contest in the House, and Mr. Labouchere forwarded his letter to Mr. Chamberlain with the following comments:

10 Queen Anne's Gate, July 2, 1881.

Dear Chamberlain,—Please look at enclosed letter. If you think it of any use, show it to Mr. Gladstone. I send it to you in order that you may see what are, I take it, the genuine intentions of Bradlaugh. I had written to him to suggest that he should go up to the table and take the oath at the end of the Session, and I offered if he liked to do so on the last day of the Session to talk on until the Black Rod appeared, or, if he preferred to do so before, I said that Government always had a majority during the last week or two, and that, probably, if a division were taken upon expulsion, he would win it.

Yesterday I received a letter from the Executive Committee of the Liberal and Radical Caucus at Northampton, telling me that Bradlaugh had sent to call a public meeting next Wednesday, and asking me to come down to meet the Committee on that day to advise with them what to do, as Bradlaugh has asked for a resolution to be passed, in the nature of a mandate ordering him to take his seat. I have written urging delay, but, of course, in this matter I have to carry out the wishes of the constituency, as the question regards them.

Whilst Bradlaugh exaggerates his strength, his opponents underestimate it. He can bring together a mob, with a vast number of fanatics in it, ready for anything, and he contends that he is illegally hindered from taking his seat, and therefore may oppose physical force to physical force.

From what I gather, from many Members of Parliament, they are very anxious that the matter should be settled this Session, because they think that its being kept open will do the Party great harm.

Why cannot the Bill[1] be brought in after the Land Bill? It has but one clause, and if our side speak very briefly, the Conservatives cannot go on talking for ever on so simple a matter. Moreover, there are a good many Conservatives who have told me that they are not against the Bill.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

[1] The Oaths Bill.

Mr. Gladstone discouraged Bradlaugh from resorting to any more militant methods just then, and intimated that it would be useless to bring in the Oaths Bill, as they proposed to close the session early in August, and they could not hope to carry any strongly controversial measure after the Land Bill.

This book is not a life of Bradlaugh, and it is enough to have noted here the first phase of the ignoble struggle. As is well known, Bradlaugh returned to the House, and following Mr. Labouchere's suggestion, administered the oath to himself. A sordid fight ensued on the attempt to remove him forcibly, in which no merely formal violence was offered. His clothes were torn off his back and, although a man of unusual physical strength, he fainted in the *mêlée*. Bradlaugh, in that Parliament, was never allowed to discharge his duty as a member. Once more re-elected by the constituency in the General Election of 1885, the Speaker would suffer no intervention, and he took the oath and his seat, and in 1888, in spite of a Conservative majority, secured the passing of an Affirmation Bill. Finally, in 1891, when Mr. Bradlaugh was lying on his death-bed, after a brief parliamentary career that had won for him the respect of all parties, the resolution of January 22, 1881, that had been passed amid "such estatic transports," was expunged from the records of the House. I cannot refrain from quoting the fine tribute paid to his memory and excellent summing up of the case as bearing on the real crux of the situation, made by Mr. Gladstone, a few days later, in the course of introducing his Religious Disabilities Removal Bill on February 4:

A distinguished man and an admirable member of this House was laid yesterday in his mother earth. He was the subject of a long controversy in this House, the beginning of which we recollect and the ending of which we recollect. We remember with what zeal it was prosecuted; we remember how summarily

it was dropped; we remember also what reparation has been done within the last few days to the distinguished man who was the immediate object of that controversy. But does anybody who hears me believe that the controversy so prosecuted and so abandoned was beneficial to the Christian Religion?

Throughout that controversy, his fellow-member for Northampton was his loyal colleague both in the country and the House. In season and out of season Mr. Labouchere spoke, moved, and agitated until the victory, to which his advocacy was so important a contribution, was won, and, after Bradlaugh's death in 1891, he published the following paragraphs in the pages of *Truth*, bearing witness to the nobility of Bradlaugh's character:

Mr. Bradlaugh was a man of herculean physical strength, but of great nervous susceptibility. I believe that he never entirely recovered from the rough usage which he met with when he sought to force his way into the House of Commons. Last year he had a serious illness. He recovered, but he came out of it a broken man. He would not, however, admit this, and he struggled on in the House of Commons, at public meetings, and at his desk, with the sad result that we all know.

Never was a man less understood. I never knew any one with a stronger sense of public decorum or with a deeper respect for law. When he asked leave to affirm in the House of Commons it was said by some that he was seeking notoriety; by others, that he wished to defy the law. What led to it was this: I was sitting by his side when the Parliament of 1881 met, and he said to me, "I shall ask to be allowed to affirm, as with my views this would be more decorous than for me to take the oath." I replied, "Are you sure that you legally can affirm?" "Yes," he answered; "I have looked closely into the matter and I am satisfied of my legal right." His attempt to affirm was, therefore, solely due to a desire to respect the feelings of others, and to the conviction that the law allowed him to do so.

Mr. Bradlaugh was my colleague for ten years. During all these years our relations, political and personal, were always of the most cordial character. He was in private life a thoroughly

true and amiable man, whilst in public life he was ever ready to sacrifice popularity to his convictions of what was right. He was, as is known, an atheist, but his standard of duty was a very high one, and he lived up to it. His life was an example to Christians, for he abounded in every Christian virtue. This the House of Commons came at last to recognise. I do not think that there is a single member more popular or more respected than he was on both sides. Often and often Conservatives have, in a friendly way, said to me: "What a much better man your colleague is than you are!" And I heartily agreed with them.

Regarding money, he was more than disinterested. So that he had enough to pay for his food, his clothes, and for his modest lodging in St. John's Wood, he never seemed to trouble himself as to ways and means. In one part of his life he had been led into some sort of commercial enterprise which did not succeed, and the failure resulted in his owing a considerable sum. He called his creditors together, told them that he had nothing, but if they would agree to wait he would pay them twenty shillings in the pound. They trusted him. He went to America, made the money by lecturing; returned, called them together, and fulfilled his promise. His lodgings in St. John's Wood were over a music shop. They consisted of one or two bedrooms and of a large room, with deal shelves round it for his books, an old bureau where he wrote, and a few chairs and tables. He had a great affection for his books, and the only time I ever saw him disquieted about money matters was when he feared that he might have to give them up, owing to some bankruptcy proceedings that were threatened, in consequence of one of his numerous actions on the oath question.

In an article, published in the *Northampton Echo* just after the death of Mr. Labouchere, that able writer, Mr. C. A. McCurdy, comments thus on the first Radical members for Northampton:

What a strangely assorted pair Northampton's two members were in those days! Bradlaugh, a giant in stature as in intellect, Boanergian in his oratory, tremendous in the strength of it, sweeping away opposition by the force of its torrent—Labou-

chere, with his slight figure, his quiet, sardonic manner, wielding a rapier which was sometimes even more deadly than the battle-axe and broadsword of his colleague. His aristocratic connections and his wealth accentuated the clear and strong outline of his Radicalism. His disregard of convention, his simplicity, his courage, his irrepressible gaiety and wit, the audacity of his envenomed personal assaults, the passionless quality of it all, the cynic's pose—all this, combined with his encyclopædic knowledge and the sureness of his aim in controversy, made him the idol of Northampton Radicals. How they laughed at his solemn assumption of moderation and orthodoxy! But how sure they were of his earnestness and conviction! And how proud of his easy triumphs in the battles of the wits, of his courage and resource in the conflicts of Parliament and the political fame which he, working loyally with Bradlaugh, helped to win for Northampton![1]

It is impossible before leaving the subject of Mr. Bradlaugh's struggle for liberty of conscience, not to recall the very similar episode of Wilkes' fight with the House of Commons a little more than a hundred years earlier. Mr. Labouchere, speaking in the House on the occasion of Bradlaugh's presenting himself to take the oath, after his re-election in 1884, pointed out that behind his colleague stood the people of England. He continued: "I do not say this from any feeling of regard or affection for Mr. Bradlaugh as an individual; assume if you like that Mr. Bradlaugh is the vilest of men [Mr. Warton, Hear, hear!], as was stated by Mr. Wilkes, 'in attacking the rights of the vilest of men you have attacked the rights of the most noble of mankind.'"[2] Bradlaugh established the principle that legislative rights are wholly independent of religious belief, and that what Drummond Wolff called "the distinct negation of anything like perpetual morality or conscience and the existence of God," does not affect a man's capacity for the exercise of his political rights.

[1] *Northampton Echo*, January 17, 1912.

[2] *Hansard*, February 11, 1884, vol. 284.

This means that the modern state is non-theistic, and that our civilisation, of which the state is the political expression, is based on those positive social needs of man to which theological problems, however interesting in themselves, are irrelevant. Thus, in Bradlaugh's victory, to the winning of which Mr. Labouchere so powerfully contributed, one of the most important principles of 1789 was definitely ratified by the representatives of the people, the Lords, spiritual and temporal, and the sovereign of this country.

A truly momentous event, the importance of which it would be hard to overestimate. For it means that God has ceased to exist in England as a political entity. In like manner, the action of Wilkes, in severely criticising the Speech from the Throne in the *North Briton* for April 23, 1762, and condemning the Ministers who were responsible for its production, raised, and settled for ever in England the question of the political position of the sovereign. In both cases the man who dared to raise such points was pursued rancorously and unfairly by the partisans of officialdom, in both cases the utmost force of law and order arrayed against him failed. The enemies of Wilkes and Bradlaugh failed, because the stars in their courses fought against them—because the time had gone by when kings could rule as well as reign, or when the qualification of religious belief was necessary for the full rights of citizenship.

CHAPTER VIII

LABOUCHERE AND IRELAND

1881–1883

WHEN Lord Cowper, the Irish Viceroy, under the influence of the Chief Secretary, Mr. Forster, represented to Mr. Gladstone in the early autumn of 1880 the necessity of coercive measures for the government of Ireland, he found the Prime Minister profoundly opposed to departure from the ordinary law. The Viceroy was pressed to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act by every agent, every landlord, every magistrate in the country. The number of outrages against life and property had increased *pari passu* with the number of evictions. The Land League, which had been formed, under the presidency of Parnell, the preceding year, had taken up the cause of the evicted tenants and, by establishing the elaborate system of persecution, named after its first victim, Lord Mayo's English agent, Captain Boycott, rendered it almost impossible to let farms from which a tenant had been evicted. When, on September 25, Lord Mountmorres, a poor man with a small estate, who could really not afford to reduce his rents, was murdered, such was the popular detestation of the murdered man that the owner of the nearest house refused shelter to the corpse, no hearse could be obtained to convey it to the grave, and the family had to fly to England. The maiming of cattle, a

method of reprisal constantly adopted by evicted tenants, further contributed to inflame English opinion, both in and out of Ireland, against the Nationalist party, who were held responsible by the man in the street for everything that was going on. Mr. Bright was still more opposed than Mr. Gladstone to the repeal of the Habeas Corpus, and so was Mr. Chamberlain, who had joined the Government as President of the Board of Trade. Before giving way to Mr. Forster, the Cabinet determined to use the ordinary methods of law, and prosecuted the heads of the Land League for "conspiring to prevent the payment of rent, resist the process of eviction, and obstruct the letting of surrendered farms." The public announcement of the prosecution in no way intimidated the Land League. The prosecution, although announced on November 3, did not, on account of legal delays, begin until after Christmas. Disorder at once became more rampant and outrages more frequent. On November 23, Cowper wrote again to Mr. Gladstone, threatening his resignation in the following January, if he were not given fuller powers. On December 12, he made his last appeal, urging that Parliament should be immediately summoned. Mr. Gladstone yielded the very day before the trial of the Land League began in Dublin, and summoned Parliament for January 6, 1881.

On the first night of the session Mr. Forster gave notice of the introduction of Bills for the protection of life and property in Ireland. But the Irish members had taken the phrase in the Queen's Speech that "additional powers are required by the Irish Government for the protection of life and property," as a declaration of war, and commenced the policy of obstruction of which they were afterwards to make so powerful a weapon. They succeeded in protracting the debate on the Address for eleven days.

Forster's case was a very simple one. The Land League was supreme, and its power must be crippled. This could only be done by extending the range of the executive. With

the suspension of Habeas Corpus the authors of the outrages, who were known to the police, could be arrested and the course of justice would not be interfered with by corrupt evidence. It was the point of view of the official responsible for public order, that and nothing more. Mr. Parnell's view pierced the surface facts of the case. The League did nothing but organise and express the public opinion of Ireland. The Government's policy was simply one of coercion, that is, of violence. Although it was admitted that wrongs were endured, the Government's policy did not include any method of redressing those wrongs. Eviction of tenants who could not possibly pay their rent through no fault of their own was palpable injustice. Let that injustice be put an end to, and outrages would soon cease. It was clearly the duty of the representatives of Ireland to put every difficulty in the way of the passing of such a measure as the Chief Secretary's.

At this stage of his career Mr. Labouchere was not a Home Ruler. In his first speech to his electors at Northampton,[1] he had said: "I really have not understood myself what Home Rule means. I should be exceedingly sorry to see the Union between Great Britain and Ireland done away with. I think it is absolutely necessary for the well-being of both countries, but I am myself in favour of as much local government, not only in Ireland, but in all parts of England as possible." He was voicing the views of Mr. Chamberlain, whose trumpet from the beginning had set forth no uncertain sound, for the member for Birmingham was then, and remained, unalterably opposed to the separation of the two kingdoms, and to the institution of an Independent Parliament in Dublin.

On January 27, Forster's Bill for the Protection of Life and Property in Ireland having been introduced three days previously, Mr. Labouchere, speaking in favour of an amendment introduced in his name to the effect "that no Bill for

[1] *Northampton Mercury*, March 27, 1880.

the Protection of Life and Property in Ireland will be satisfactory which does not include protection to the tenant in cases where it can be shown, to the satisfaction of a Court of Justice, that the tenant's rent is excessive or that he is unable, owing to temporary circumstances, to pay it," said that, while he was a genuine supporter of the Prime Minister, he did not intend to rain down blessings on that gentleman's head that evening. He found himself occupying a singular position. He was returned there as a Radical by a very advanced constituency, and, to his surprise, he found himself almost alone with his colleague as an advocate of Conservatism in the real, though not in the party, sense of the word. He was there to defend the Habeas Corpus. He was ready to admit that Englishmen had many virtues, but they were somewhat intolerant, and they were curiously intolerant when any country under their rule ventured to have the same virtues as themselves. There was nothing they valued so highly as self-government, and yet, when Ireland asked for self-government in local matters, they regarded the demand as something monstrous and intolerable. The Chief Secretary had urged that the Bill must be passed as quickly as possible on account of outrages! He must remember that there were such things as standing orders, and that honourable gentlemen opposite would be able to delay the Bill for a considerable time. . . . It was taking a really too Arcadian view of human nature to suppose that honourable gentlemen opposite would not use—or even misuse—every standing order of the House to prevent the passing of such a Bill. The right honourable gentleman seemed to have thought, in pleading urgency, that the Irish members would act like the "dilly, dilly ducks" which came to be killed when they were called. The reports of the outrages had come from magistrates most of whom were landowners, and from police constables; and they knew in England how to judge of constables' evidence. (Oh! oh!) He quoted a return. "Injured persons were Margaret Lydon, Patrick Whalem, and

Bridget Whalem. It appeared that: A dispute arose about the possession of a small plot of ground, and John Lydon assaulted the injured persons. Yet, in the very next case, John Lydon appeared as the injured person, because he was assaulted as the time of the above dispute by his own wife. This was obviously a little domestic difference between a husband and his spouse, yet it was converted into two separate outrages. As regarded cattle maiming, it was no new thing. Dean Swift jeered at his countrymen on the subject. 'Did they, like Don Quixote, look on a flock of sheep as an army?'" Labouchere wound up his speech, after pointing out the danger of the Chief Secretary's "hideous doctrine of constructive treason" and animadverting on the idea of making use of secret informers, whom he regarded as "the lowest, vilest, and most contemptible of the human race," by stating that the purpose of the Bill was not to suppress outrages or exclusive dealing, but solely to enable landlords to collect their rents.[1] Mr. Serjeant Simon retorted in his defence of the Bill, not quite unjustly perhaps, that Mr. Labouchere's speech had been more facetious than fair, more humorous than consistent. Certainly the John Lydon mixed outrage was a hardly representative specimen of the statistics before the House. The O'Donoghue, on the other hand, had listened to the speech with great pleasure, and felt sure it would be received with satisfaction by a larger circle outside the constituency of Northampton when public opinion in England and Scotland came to be enlightened on this subject. Labouchere continued to argue against the Bill in Committee in every imaginable way. Much of his argument was mere heckling of Mr. Forster. He was always a little inclined to confuse the floor of the House with the hustings, a state of mind which sometimes deprived his speeches of the persuasive value that their argumentative ability deserved. Every now and then he made a crushing point against the Govern-

[1] *Hansard*, Jan. 27, 1881, vol. 257.

ment. "The Home Secretary (Sir William Harcourt)," he said, "had incited a prejudice against the Land League by quoting what the Fenians had done in America. He had read a speech from a Mr. Devoy, an American Fenian, to the effect that he had contemplated blowing up the entire Government of this country, most of the towns in this country and the capital, and, is this monster, the Home Secretary had asked, to be allowed to say these things without protest? He had pointed out the terrible consequences of this speech: how a certain Patrick Stewart immediately subscribed the sum of one dollar that these intentions might be carried out. . . . Such men as Redpath (another American Fenian) and Devoy, the Right Honourable gentleman told them, would 'come over to Ireland, and the Bill is intended for those gentlemen.' Surely," pursued Mr. Labouchere blandly, "the Right Honourable gentleman was an eminent authority on international law and must be aware that, if these Americans were to come over to Ireland, and if they were to be taken up on mere suspicion and put in prison for eighteen months without being told, or without their Minister in England being told, for what they were put in prison, we should get, and rightly too, into considerable difficulty with the American Government. (Sir William Harcourt: No!) The Right Honourable gentleman said no. Perhaps he meant that he would get us out of the difficulty. But would it not have been better to have brought in an Aliens Bill than to suspend the Habeas Corpus in Ireland? It was a strange thing to suspend the Habeas Corpus in Ireland, because an American had made a speech in America."[1] This characteristic speech is a very good specimen of Labouchere's method in attack. His manner was one of irresponsible persiflage, stinging and exasperating those of his opponents whom it failed to amuse,[2] his matter both sound and serious. It would have been difficult to have summed up

[1] *Hansard*, Feb. 25, 1881, vol. 258.

[2] To their credit, be it said, they generally were amused.

Forster's Bill better than Labouchere did in the following list of "Alleged advantages and real disadvantages of the Bill." (1) Alleged advantages: (*a*) it would drive a certain number of crazy Fenians out of Ireland. (*b*) It would lead to the imprisonment of certain village ruffians who probably deserve it. (*c*) It would enable landlords to collect their rents. (2) Disadvantages: (*a*) It would do away with the useful action of the Land League. (*b*) It would enable the landlords not only to collect their rents from men who could pay them, but also to evict from their small holdings men who could not—the very thing the Land League had been preventing. (*c*) It would alienate all classes in Ireland from the English connection. (*d*) It would substitute secret societies for the open society called the Land League. (*e*) The Government would be playing into the hands of the Fenians, who would acquire an influence they did not then possess. Certainly it would have been difficult to prophesy more accurately what were the actual consequences of the passing of the Coercion Bill. He concluded his speech on this occasion by warning the Irish members not to persevere in a policy of obstruction, both on account of the prejudice it created against them and on account of the excellence of their cause. Let that cause be stated fairly and honestly to the English people—let it be allowed to stand on its own merits. He believed many people in England were already very much inclined to take the same view as many Irishmen on Irish matters. There were many points on which the democracy of England and Ireland ought to unite. He therefore hoped that honourable gentlemen opposite would not be carried away by the irritation of the moment. He hated the Coercion Bill as much as they did, but he could not shut his eyes to the fact that the Liberals, not the Conservatives, had done the best for Ireland, and he wound up with a eulogy in this connection of the "two patron saints of my political calendar"—Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright.[1]

[1] *Hansard*, Feb. 25, 1881, vol. 258.

The Arms Bill—or the Peace Preservation Bill, as it was called—by which the Coercion Bill was promptly followed, was another target for Mr. Labouchere's darts. He pointed out the suspicious nature of the support given by the Opposition to the Government, which delayed the introduction of Liberal legislation for England and widened the breach between the Liberal party and the Irish.

Perhaps the most serious and immediate consequence of the Coercion Act was the arrest of Parnell, which took place on October 13. This event, which caused frenzied joy in England, was one of Forster's worst mistakes in Ireland. The Land League at once issued a "No rent" manifesto. It was signed by Parnell, Dillon, Sexton, and Brennan, who were all in Kilmainham Gaol, and Egan, the treasurer of the League at Paris. Forster, not sorry to be able to do so, retorted by proclaiming the League an illegal association, the legality of which proceeding was doubtful, according to Lord Eversley. It had been impossible to convict the League of a violation of the law and the Coercion Act contained no clause authorising its suppression. On the other hand, the "No rent" manifesto was also an obvious blunder. The clergy denounced it from every altar in Ireland, as indeed they could hardly help doing, and only in the west, where large bodies of the poorer tenants were already refusing to pay their rents without deduction, did it take effect. The agrarian war was consequently intensified, and English opinion greatly incensed. The local heads of the League were arrested all over the disturbed areas, and the Coercion Act pressed into the service of landlords to enable them to collect their rents, no matter how excessive they might be. Evictions were naturally multiplied. Most serious consequence of all—and directly traceable to the ill-advised arrest of Parnell and the leaders of the Land League—secret societies, with their inevitable accompaniment of crime and outrage, began to take the place of open and, at least relatively, constitutional agitation. Parnell

had been asked by an admirer, who would take his place in case of his arrest. "Captain Moonlight will take my place," was his grim reply. Captain Moonlight did so. During the months preceding the passing of the Coercion Act there were seven homicides, twenty-one cases of firing at the person, and sixty-two of firing into dwellings.

The work of the suppressed Land League was carried on by the Ladies' Land League under the presidency of Parnell's sister. The ladies, if they did not actually stimulate crime, did little to suppress it. When Parnell eventually emerged from Kilmainham, he was furious with them, both on account of their policy and their extravagance. Outrages had increased, and they had spent £70,000 during the seven months of his incarceration!

The Coercion Act had evidently failed to produce the results expected. Nevertheless, Forster and Lord Cowper could think of nothing but more coercion. Gladstone refused to accede to their proposals. He had never liked coercion himself, and his hands were strengthened by the support of Chamberlain in the Cabinet, who was energetically backed in the press by John Morley, then editing the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Meanwhile Parnell, realising that his prolonged detention at Kilmainham was damaging his cause, entered into negotiations with the Government by means of Captain O'Shea; and although Mr. Gladstone was, no doubt, literally truthful in denying the existence of any formal "treaty," an understanding was reached between the Government and the Irish leader. The main source of unrest and disorder in the country was, according to Parnell, the smaller tenants, some 100,000 in number, who were utterly unable to pay the arrears of rent due from them, and were, in consequence, liable at any moment to eviction. The Government must deal in a generous and statesmanlike way with the lot of these unhappy people. Parnell, if free to resume an effective leadership, would be able to do much to curb the criminal forces set in motion by the secret societies.

On May 2, Parnell and his companions were released from Kilmainham, and Forster and Lord Cowper at once resigned.

Forster made his statement in the House on May 4. It was to the effect that the state of the country did not justify the release of Parnell without a new Coercion Act. Just as he had uttered the following words, "There are two warrants which I signed in regard to the member for the City of Cork—" Parnell entered the House. It was a dramatic scene. Deafening cheers broke from the Irish benches, drowning Forster's voice and preventing the conclusion of the sentence from being heard. Parnell quickly surveyed the situation, and, bowing to the Speaker, passed "with head erect and measured tread to his place, the victor of the House."

Mr. Gladstone answered Forster, saying that the circumstances which had warranted Parnell's arrest no longer existed, and that "he had an assurance that if the Government dealt with the arrears question, the three members released would range themselves on the side of law and order." Parnell then intervened, saying that he had in no way suggested any bargain with the Prime Minister, but that there could be no doubt that a settlement of the arrears question would have an enormous effect in the restoration of law and order, and would take away the last excuse for outrage.

Irish prospects had not looked brighter in the House for many a year, but, unfortunately, only two days after the memorable afternoon on which Mr. Gladstone dissociated himself from his sometime Irish Minister and threw himself into Parnell's arms, England was horrified by a terrible tragedy. Lord Spencer and Lord Frederick Cavendish had been appointed to the vacant offices of Lord Cowper and Mr. Forster. The new Chief Secretary and Mr. Burke, permanent Under-Secretary, were murdered close to the Vice-regal Lodge in Phœnix Park, on the evening following Lord Spencer's state entry into Dublin. Mr. O'Brien, in his *Life of Parnell*, says that "Cavendish was killed simply

through the accident of his being with Mr. Burke, whose death was the real object of the assassins."[1] No one was more overwhelmed by the tragedy than Parnell himself. "How can I," he said, "carry on a public agitation if I am stabbed in the back in this way?"

The House met on the 8th, and Parnell made a short, straightforward speech, condemning the outrages in unqualified terms. He also expressed the fear that the Government would feel themselves obliged, under the circumstances, to revert to coercion. His fear was justified, and on May 11, the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, introduced a Crimes Bill, based on previous suggestions of Lord Cowper.

It is easy to see now that this proceeding was a mistake. It should have been evident to any unbiassed observer that, far from Parnell and the League being responsible for outrages, whether agrarian or political, it was during the imprisonment of Parnell and after the dissolution of the League that they increased and finally led up to the tragedy of Phœnix Park. But the Government had to count with English opinion, which was exasperated by the murder of Burke and Cavendish almost to the point of hysteria. To most English people Ireland was little more than a geographical expression; in so far as it connoted anything else, it bored and disgusted them. Parnell indicated the true inwardness of Mr. Gladstone's altered attitude in a speech on May 20, in which he said: "I regret that the event in Phœnix Park has prevented him (Mr. Gladstone) continuing the course of conciliation that we had expected from him. I regret that, owing to the exigencies of his party, of his position in the country, he has felt himself compelled to turn from that course of conciliation and concession into the horrible paths of coercion."

Labouchere took Mr. Parnell's view of the situation, and argued with much zest against the worst features of the Crimes Bill. Speaking on May 18, on the second reading,

[1] R. Barry O'Brien, *Life of Parnell.*

he said that it was clear from the fact that the House was now asked to pass a remedial measure (the Arrears Bill) and a Coercion Bill that the former policy of the Government had been a failure.

But the present Coercion Bill erred precisely in the same direction that the other had done, because it was not aimed solely at outrage, but was directed at honourable members sitting opposite. In fact he (Mr. Labouchere) could see the trail of the honourable member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) and of his policy in this measure. The Government ought to try to get the majority of the Irish people on their side to fight with them against outrage. Was this Bill likely to enlist the sympathies of the Irish members? Mr. Labouchere expressed the principle of his objection to the Bill by saying that as long as political and criminal elements were mixed up in the Bill he could not vote for it. He objected particularly to the following features. The "intimidation clause" went too far, being directed against boycotting, which, although it had its bad features, was, as a system of exclusive trading, legitimate. He considered it "monstrous" that the authorities should have power to detain any person out after sunset. He objected to the clause dealing with the press, and he thought that three years was too long a period for the Bill to remain in force. Who could say who might be Lord-Lieutenant in three years? He could not imagine anything more horrible than that, say, the right honourable gentleman the member for North Lincolnshire (Mr. J. Lowther) should be invested with the powers of the Bill. The consequence would perhaps be, that if the Prime Minister went over to Ireland, he would be arrested and put into prison. His admiration for the Prime Minister was increasing, but all his colleagues were not as well minded as himself. There seemed to be two currents in the cabinet—some members who desired to do all they could for Ireland being baulked by those of their colleagues called Whigs.[1]

[1] *Hansard*, May 14, 1881.

Mr. Labouchere worked out of Parliament, as well as in, for the improvement of the Bill. He was incessantly negotiating both with the Government and the Irish leaders to defeat what he felt to be its impossible features and to modify the remaining ones in the direction of conciliation. He had written two days before the speech just mentioned to Mr. Chamberlain as follows:

10 Queen Anne's Gate, May 16, 1882.

Dear Chamberlain,—I enclose Bill with Healy's amendments. He says that what he means in the suggested changes in the Intimidation Clause is, that only a person who actually threatens a person with injury should come under the provisions of the Bill. What he objects to is constructive intimidation.

I went through the Bill thus amended with Parnell. He agrees with them in the main, but would like to have the opinion of a lawyer with regard to them. Like Healy, his chief objection is to constructive intimidation. He says that if the Government will meet him and his party in the conciliatory spirit of the amendments, he will promise that the opposition to the Bill shall be conducted on honest Parliamentary lines, and that there shall be no abstention. He specially urges that the Bill shall only be in operation until the close of next session; he puts this on two grounds: (1) That the Tories may possibly come in at the end of that time. (2) That he may be able to advise the Irish to be quiet in the hopes of no renewal of the Bill.

He says that he is in a very difficult position between the Government and the secret societies. The latter, he says, are more numerous than are supposed; that most of those connected with them only wish to be let alone, but that he greatly fears that if they are disgusted they will commit outrages. The late murders, he seems to think, were, when agrarian, the acts of men who had a grudge against a particular individual, and, when political, the acts of skirmishers from America. I really think that he is most anxious to be able to support the Government; he fully admits that a Bill is necessary on account of English opinion, but he does not wish to have it applied to himself, and he doubts whether it will be really effectual against the outrage mongers.

Healy goes so far as to say that if the Prime Minister or you were to administer the Bill it would do no harm, and that he is not greatly afraid of it in the hands of Lord Spencer, but that it would be a monstrous weapon of oppression in the hands of Jim Lowther. I am sure that with conciliation you can now, for the first time, get the Parnellites on your side.

This letter Mr. Chamberlain sent to Mr. Gladstone, promising to bring the draft of the Bill to the House that afternoon.

Mr. Labouchere continued to Mr. Chamberlain on the following day:

He (Healy) points out that even the Conservative newspapers are against the Newspaper Clause, and he wants it made applicable only to newspapers printed out of Ireland. With regard to the Search Clause, he will make a fight for nominative warrants, and he also wants an amendment securing an indemnity in case of injury done to property by the searchers. He points out that there ought to be a right of appeal from the County Court Judge to the Queen's Bench. With respect to the Intimidation Clause, he seems to approve of cutting out the definition clause, but is very anxious for some restriction in the terms of the clause, so that there may be no crime of constructive intimidation.

There is to be a private meeting at one to-morrow of himself, Parnell, T. P. O'Connor, and Sexton. He will say to them that he thinks that Government will agree to the County Court Judges and to the period of the Bill being shortened. He will, however, before the meeting, go further into details as regards the position with Parnell. He is most desirous that there should be no plea for saying that there is a bargain of any kind. I have told him that, in the Prime Minister, they have a friend, but that they must take into consideration his position as the leader of a Government where possibly all are not as well disposed, and as the head of a country where there is a popular outcry for stringent measures.

On May 22, he wrote again, after a further interview with Parnell:

This is about the sum total of what Parnell took an hour to tell me. He does not in the least complain of you, and really is most anxious to get on with the Government if possible. He wants me to let him know as soon as possible to-morrow whether he is to consider that there is to be no concession.

Parnell says: That the Arrears Bill has been very well received in Ireland, and that, if it be followed by one making certain modifications of no very important character in the Land Bill, he is convinced that the situation will greatly improve, *provided* that concessions be made in the Coercion Bill.

He suggests that the Coercion and the Arrears Bill move forward *pari passu*, and that only small progress be made with the Coercion Bill before Whitsuntide, in order to give time for the passions to cool, and for persons to see by experience that the condition of Ireland is not so bad as is supposed.

If urgency is to be voted on the Coercion Bill, he asks that it should be voted by a simple majority, and that it should be stated that it will be used whenever any Legislative measures in regard to Ireland are brought forward during the Session and obstructed by the Conservatives.

He greatly regrets the speech of Davitt, but says that he (Davitt) has no intention to go to Ireland, and that his land scheme is a little fad of his own.

He says that he is most anxious for a *modus vivendi*, and believes that if the present opportunity for establishing one be let pass, it is not likely to recur. He and his friends, he says, are incurring the serious risk of assassination in their efforts to bring it about, and he thinks that his suggestions ought to be judged on their merits, but that, with the Coercion Act as it is, there will be so much anger and ill-feeling in Ireland, that all alliance with the Liberal party will be impossible.

He points out, not as a matter of bargain, but as a fact, that the Liberals may—if only there be concessions on the Coercion Bill, and a few modifications in the Land Bill—count on the Irish vote, as against the Conservatives, and suggests that this will make the Government absolutely safe, even though there be Whig defections.

Mr. Labouchere continued, as will be seen by the fol-

lowing letters to Mr. Chamberlain, to press the views of the Irish leaders upon the Government.

10 Queen Anne's Gate, June 3, 1882.

Dear Chamberlain,—We have done our best during your absence to hold our own against Harcourt. The only important issue yet raised has been the exclusion of treason and treason felony from the Bill.

On Thursday I went to Grosvenor from Parnell to ask that the debate should be adjourned. Gladstone said that Parnell ought to consider that after Harcourt's "no surrender" speech the Government would not be able to give in the next day, and that the division if taken would be larger on Thursday than on Friday, and that the matter might be reconsidered in Report. I said that if Government would give any private assurance, or if Gladstone would say in the House, that the exclusion would be favourably considered on Report, he could have the division at once. This latter he was afraid to do, for Harcourt, as sulky as a bear, was glaring at him. He therefore agreed to consent "with regret" to the adjournment. When, however, Parnell moved it, our idiots and the Conservatives shouted so loudly "no," that a division had to be taken. Then Healy moved it, on which Gladstone did hint at the Report, but said nothing definite, except that it would be impossible to consult at once with the Irish Executive. The next day, Grosvenor wrote to me to say that he spoke without prejudice and held out no hope, but would I call "Parnell's attention to one sentence in one of Gladstone's concluding speeches, which was to the effect that it was impossible to call the attention of the Irish Government to the question of omitting treason and treason felony, between last night and this day, and therefore it would be better to bring up the question again on Report. Please ask Parnell to consider this fact."

On Friday morning the Irish held a meeting, and they agreed to keep what they did secret, decided that if treason were retained, at least treason felony should be eliminated.

On the House meeting Trevelyan tackled me, and said: "I am opposed to the insertion of treason and treason felony, and

I am disposed to make large concessions. You know that I am a person of strong will. I now understand the Bill, and you will see how I shall act."

Grosvenor also said that I need not believe him, as he quite agreed with me, but that Harcourt was the difficulty. I asked him whether he would agree that if Lord Spencer said that treason and treason felony were not needed, they should be struck out on Report. He replied that the onus could not be thrown on Spencer, but that it must be the act of the Cabinet.

So after seeing Parnell it was agreed that the division should be taken at 7.30.

Why Parnell is making such a fight over this, and will make a fight over the Intimidation Clause, is that unless concession be made, he will find it difficult to hold his own. Egan, he says, wants to carry on the agitation from Paris, in which case it will be illegal; he wants to carry it on in Dublin, in which case it will be legal. If concessions are made he will have his way; if not, Egan will remain the master in Paris.

Grosvenor quite admits that it is most desirable to aid Parnell to remain leader.

Parnell says:

"I ask, in order to put an end definitely to the land agitation: that a clause should be introduced into the Arrears Bill, allowing small tenants in the Land Court to pay on Griffiths' valuation until their cases are decided: that there should be an expansion of the Bright Clauses next year if not this; and that a Royal Commission be appointed to keep the agricultural labourers quiet by taking evidence. Then I propose to ask for a fair and reasonable measure of local self-government, such as an English Government can grant," and he assures me that in all questions between me and the Conservatives and the Liberals, the latter shall have the Irish vote. I believe that he is perfectly sincere, and that he is thoroughly frightened by threats of assassination; indeed he told me that he never went about without a revolver in his pocket, and even then did not feel safe.

I write you all this for your private information, as you may wish to know the exact situation at present.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Reform Club, June 8, 1882.

Dear Chamberlain,—Parnell says that it is absolutely necessary that something should be understood, and that if no concession be made on the Intimidation Clause, he considers that things revert to where they were under the Forster régime, and that they will fight until urgency is voted and then fight on urgency until a *coup d'état* is carried out. Allowing for some exaggeration, a simple consideration of his position towards his party shows that this programme is necessarily forced upon him.

Surely we have a right to see the clause as Government will agree to it, before passing a portion of it.

I believe that this would be agreed to: that intimidation shall mean any threats, etc., to violence, any boycotting which involves danger such, for instance, as a doctor refusing to attend a sick man, or a refusal to supply the necessaries of life, and any specific act that is set out in the Bill, but *nothing more.*

C. Russell, Bryce, and Davy are trying their hands at this and hope to be able to frame a clause on these lines. You will no doubt see that, if something cannot be done to-morrow, the fat will be in the fire. Would it not therefore be well to leave the clause until the other clauses are passed, and then bring it on? —Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

10 Queen Anne's Gate, June 9, 1882.

Dear Chamberlain,—I wrote you a line in a great hurry last night, but after the House had adjourned I again saw Parnell.

He is most anxious that Mr. Gladstone should not think that obstruction arises from any ill-feeling towards him, and that he does not, in his own interests, wish it to be thought that anything in the nature of a bargain is to be made.

But he wants Mr. Gladstone to know facts. He says that there are two sections in the Land League. The funds of the League are at Paris, where a large sum is invested in securities. Egan wishes to trench on these securities, but Parnell and Davitt have been able to stop this, and at present nothing is expended but the weekly contributions. Egan and his section of the League are furious at the idea of the League being converted into a moderate tenant right Association, with its headquarters

in Dublin. This he desires. Every day the ultras of his party are telling him that nothing is gained by conciliation. If the Bill is to be passed in its present shape, he declares that neither he nor his friends can have anything to do with a moderate policy, and, as they absolutely decline to associate themselves with Egan and his desperate courses, they must withdraw.

The result, he says, will be that the Fenians will be masters of the situation, that they will have funds, and that there will be assassinations and outrages all over Ireland. So soon as he withdraws, he considers that his own life will not be worth a day's purchase.

If he is able to head the tenant right Association, he considers that he can crush out the Fenians—more especially if something is done in the Arrears Bill to meet the difficulty of the small tenants, who are waiting for their cases to be decided on in the Land Courts, being evicted, before their cases come on, for non-payment of excessive rents. If nothing be done in this matter, and if he be allowed to have his tenant right Association, this he says will be his great difficulty next winter. He wishes Mr. Gladstone to observe that Davitt has not made any speeches in Ireland, and he says that he obtained this pledge from him in order to show the result of conciliation. He disagrees entirely with Davitt's "nationalisation" of land scheme, and says that the Irish tenants do not themselves desire it.

He again suggests whether it would not be possible to insert limitations in the Intimidation Clause? And he would suggest that, if possible, it would be desirable to leave the clause as it stands, without any definition section, and to say that, as there is no desire to prevent an orderly and legal tenant right Association, additions will be made to the clause on Report, defining all this.

As regards the tribunal, he hopes that Mr. Gladstone will agree to a proviso, making the Court consist of a magistrate and a barrister. This he thinks will render it more easy to accept the intimidation clause with the limitations that he suggests, for many of the resident magistrates are half-pay captains, who have been appointed by interest, and who are hand in glove with the landlords, and some of them are certain to act foolishly.

If this be accepted, if unlawful associations are made there

which the Lord Lieutenant declares to be unlawful; if it be made a crime to not attend an unlawful assembly, but to riot at, or to refuse to retire if called upon to do so from an unlawful assembly, I do not think that he attaches very great importance to the duration of the Act, although he still says that he does, but he would be satisfied if the duration of the Act were for three years with the proviso that the Lord Lieutenant has to prolong it (if it is prolonged) by a proclamation at the end of each year. He is anxious for this, because he thinks that he could do much for the cause of law and order, if he were able to point out that possibly the Act would not run for the whole three years, if the Irish are quiet and peaceable.

His main anxiety at the present moment seems to be, that Mr. Gladstone should understand the position of the Land League and of its leaders. He wishes most sincerely to fight with the Government against all outrages, and he complains that his good intentions are met every moment by a *non possumus* of lawyers, who seem to regard it as a matter of *amour propre* not to listen to him, and he says (and I am sure he believes it) that the result will be murders and outrages which will end in martial law.—Yours truly, H. LABOUCHERE.

P.S.—With regard to supply, he says that he thinks it a little hard, that he should be asked not to obstruct one Bill, because the Conservatives will obstruct another, and he suggests that Supply might be taken before the Report on the Bill now under discussion, with some sort of understanding that the Irish would not put down notices on going into Committee of Supply. But on this matter, he says that he is certain that if Mr. Gladstone will fairly look into his suggestions, he will see their force, and he still hopes that all obstruction, etc., etc., may be avoided.

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, June 10, 1882.

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—As it seems to be understood that Harcourt had stated in the House his readiness to accept the amendment which I gave you yesterday, Healy has put it down.

As regards "unlawful," which was negatived last night, I explained to Healy that it was impossible to make the limitation on account of legal and technical difficulties, and he fully accepted this explanation.

With regard to the two limitations which stand in Parnell's name, and which they ask for, I told Healy that the wording of the limitations could not be used, as it would have a bad effect to say in an Act that the non-payment of rent is *not* an offence. To this he assented, and is quite ready to accept any words, taken from the Act of '75 or from anywhere else, which will cover the limitations. Would it not be as well to have the words ready, and to let Parnell have them, or at least to be ready with the substituted words when Parnell's amendment comes on?

There is a clause about exclusive dealing. When the suggestions which I submitted to you were being discussed by Parnell and Healy, they were very anxious to include Davy's amendment in regard to exclusive dealing, substituting for "dealing with"—"buying," by which they would have excluded a refusal to buy from Boycotting. I got them to say that this was not to be pressed if Government declined to accept the amendment, so I did not trouble you with it. Late last evening Parnell wanted to insist on it, so I appealed to Healy. He said that they were bound not to insist on more than had been submitted to you, as this would not be honourable, and therefore all trouble on this head is avoided.

Of course they will in the House divide on some amendment in regard to exclusive dealing, as a protest, and they may make one or two speeches, but there will be no obstruction, and I see no reason why the Bill should not be through Committee (notwithstanding Goschen's gloomy prognostications) in a few days.

It would, I think, very much tend to aid matters if Harcourt could in the course of discussion state, that in all cases a barrister will sit with a residential magistrate. He has already said that there will be an appeal to Quarter Sessions, which in Ireland means an appeal to the County Court Judge. But some of the residential magistrates are very foolish persons, and all are regarded as men in the landlords' camp.

Also, is it not possible to arrive at some clear definition as to what is an unlawful association? Parnell says that it is left now to any residential magistrate to decide the matter. He suggests that only such associations shall be unlawful, for the purpose of the Act, which are proclaimed as such by the Lord Lieutenant.

But provided that there be a clear definition, he does not care for any particular wording.

Parnell and Healy request me to say that they are very grateful to Mr. Gladstone for meeting them half-way, and they seem only now anxious about "treason felony." As Herschell told me that he thinks everything necessary will be covered by the word "treason," I hope that this matter will also be settled satisfactorily.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

P.S.—Parnell would not like any one but you and Mr. Gladstone to know about his dispute with Egan, and the embargo on the League funds, except in a very general way.

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, June 24, 1882.

DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I saw Parnell, and spoke to him as you wished.

His answer is practically this:

"I acknowledge that Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain have acted fairly, and so far as I can I should always be ready to meet their wishes. But I deny that we have obtained the concessions that we expected. I am not prepared to go back to Ireland and engage in bringing the agitation within constitutional limits, on the mere chance of Lord Spencer not arresting me. The Fenians want one thing: the Ladies' League another: the people in Paris (Egan) another: and I another. Therefore I shall limit my action to Parliament and leave the Government and the Fenians to fight it out in Ireland. The Cabinet do not seem to realise that the Crimes Bill is a very complex one, and very loosely drawn up. There has been no obstruction in the proper sense of the word, although I admit that the Irish have repeated again and again the same arguments on amendments. But this I cannot help, unless I tell them that they will get something by holding their tongues. When the Conservatives threatened obstruction on Procedure, this was met by telling them that the majority resolution would not be pressed if they would facilitate business. Why should not the same arrangement be made with us? Let us know what amendments will be accepted in future. I am most anxious to carry out what I understood was the contemplated policy when I was released from Kilmain-

ham, and to work with the Government in bringing the active phase of Irish agitation to a close. But this I cannot do if I am suspected of ulterior objects, and if I cannot show that something is gained for my party."

He then suggested that if the Government would take their November Session for alterations in the Land Act, he would do his best to facilitate business now in regard to the Crimes, and the Arrears Bill, and the Procedure Resolutions, provided that the majority Resolution were maintained.

I asked him what he really wanted under the term of alterations in the Land Act?

He said: "To go back to the system of reductions in rent which was acted on before the Stuart Donleath case, and to extend the Bright clauses in the sense of W. H. Smith's resolution."

Finally, I again urged him to remember what Mr. Gladstone and you had done for him already, and to see whether he could not manage to bring the Committee Stage of the Bill to an end within a reasonable time.

On Monday, Sexton proposes to cut Chaplin out by bringing forward a resolution about the suspects. Parnell says that this is absolutely necessary, because he and his friends are blamed for only caring for their own release. But Sexton will say that he only does this, because it is a choice between his resolution and Chaplin's, and there will be no talking to hinder the Government from getting their money, or with the object of obstructing.

I have got to go to Northampton on Monday, so I shall not be in the House until late.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

When the Crimes Act was finally passed, Mr. Labouchere expressed himself in *Truth* as follows:

When Mr. Parnell was released from Kilmainham, it was understood that the Land Act would be amended, that evictions would be stopped by an Arrears Bill, and that the leaders of the land movement would be permitted to agitate within fair legal limits in favour of the political and social changes desired by their countrymen. Had this understanding been carried out, the breach between the Parnellites and the Liberals would have been healed.

Mr. Forster was the first to perceive that as a result of a *modus vivendi* he would have to disappear with his policy of coercion. He therefore resigned, in the hope that this would render it impossible to carry out the Kilmainham compact. Then followed the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish. The horror which this created was skilfully used by the Whigs in the Cabinet, and they succeeded in promoting a Bill, not so much aimed at outrages as at the Kilmainham compact. This Bill is a complete codification of arbitrary rule. It places the lives, liberties, and property of the Irish in the hands of the Executive, and seeks to suppress every species of political agitation.

Unfortunately, Mr. Trevelyan was awaiting his re-election when it was introduced, and it was left to Sir William Harcourt to carry it through the House of Commons. Of course, as Sir William is the head-centre of the Whigs, he delighted in his task. Not only did he refuse every modification of the Bill, except those which were rendered absolutely necessary by the absurd way in which it was drawn, but almost every day he envenomed discussion by transpontine outbursts against the Irish members. I do not blame him. I blame no one who plays his cards to his own best advantage. This is human nature. Sir William knew that if the English Radicals and the Irish were allied, he and his Whigs would lose all influence, whilst of Ireland he knew absolutely nothing.

The result, therefore, has been that the Whigs triumph, and that several weeks have been wasted in passing a Bill which will do nothing to hinder outrages, but which will simply increase the ill-feeling between England and Ireland.

If the leaders of the land movement are wise, they will not endeavour to hold meetings. They should declare that public meeting has been rendered impossible by the Crimes Act; and they should, as an act of charity, collect funds to aid all who have been evicted, no matter from what cause, and thus band the Irish tenants together in a friendly society. At the same time, they should devote all their energies to increase their numbers in the next Parliament, and they should submit test questions to every Liberal standing for an English constituency where there are Irish voters, and make these votes dependent upon the manner in which the questions are answered. If Mr. Parnell can

hold the balance in Parliament between the rival aspirants for the Treasury Bench, he may be certain that any just demand that he may make will be granted. The democracy of England and Ireland, with Mr. Gladstone at their head, would make short work of Conservative and Whig obstructive trash. The landlords in Ireland and the Whigs in England stand in the way of peace and tranquillity in the former island, and of mutual good feeling in both.[1]

To quote Mr. Labouchere's views on Ireland during the dark and gloomy period which followed the introduction of the Prevention of Crimes Bill is to quote Mr. Chamberlain's, for, as is seen by their constant correspondence, the two were one in their views on Irish discontent. Mr. Chamberlain made a speech at Swansea in February, 1883, in which he asked his audience how long they supposed Englishmen with their free institutions would tolerate the existence of an Irish Poland so near to their own shores. Was separation the only alternative? He thought not. Separation, in his opinion, would "jeopardise the security of this country, and would be fatal to the prosperity and happiness of Ireland." He, like Labouchere, was prepared to relax the bond, even by conceding what was then known as Home Rule, which would not include an independent Parliament or a separate executive.[2]

However, in 1883 and 1884, Englishmen had other things to occupy their minds than the rights and wrongs of Ireland. In order to follow the political career of Mr. Labouchere we must for a time leave the Irish question and consider "the policy of Gladstone's Government in Egypt."

[1] *Truth*, July 6, 1882.

[2] S. H. Jeyes, *Mr. Chamberlain.*

CHAPTER IX

LABOUCHERE AND MR. GLADSTONE'S EGYPTIAN POLICY

LORD MORLEY has commented on the irony of fate which imposed on Mr. Gladstone the unwelcome task of Egyptian occupation. "It was one of the ironies," he says, "in which every active statesman's life abounds." Disparity between intentions and achievements is indeed inevitable in all departments of activity, but nowhere more so than in cases of what may be called creative policy. Destruction is easy. But a constructive policy which shall bring about a new and more favourable state of things, and may, therefore, in this sense be called creative, is strangely apt either to overshoot its mark or to deviate into unexpected channels, with results wholly unlooked for by the statesman responsible for its conduct.

Certainly this ironic force of circumstances was peculiarly apparent in the case of Mr. Gladstone's Egyptian policy. The problem of Egypt was not of his seeking, but was a legacy from the Tories. In 1875 Disraeli, against the advice of Lord Derby, his Foreign Minister, and without consulting the other members of his Cabinet, arranged with the London Rothschilds to purchase Khedive Ismail's shares in the Suez Canal for four millions sterling. Ismail, whose absolute reign of eighteen years had cost Egypt[1] no less a sum than four hundred millions sterling, had been

[1] Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt.*

driven by his preposterous extravagance, and the consequent exhaustion of both his legitimate and illegitimate methods of procuring revenue, to look abroad for financial assistance. France, besides being crippled by the war of 1870, was regarded with suspicion in the matter of the canal, and the only alternative to France was England. A trifle like four millions was very far from what Ismail really required to give any sort of financial stability to his government, and, after the loan with Rothschild had been negotiated, the British Cabinet sent out a series of commissioners to study the state of affairs on the spot, and to see what could be done in the interests of Egyptian rule and, incidentally, of the foreign bondholders. Eventually a settlement of Ismail's affairs, known as the Goschen-Joubert arrangement, was made, by which the enormous yearly payment of nearly seven millions sterling was charged on the Egyptian revenue. Greek usurers attended the tax-gatherers on their rounds, and the ruined fellaheen were forced to mortgage their lands to meet these amazing demands. Even such methods failed of success owing to the famine of the two preceding years. The obviously juster course was now to let Ismail become bankrupt and abandon the Goschen-Joubert arrangement, but the foreign bondholders were naturally opposed to this, and pointed out reasonably enough that the English Government had guaranteed the loan. The moment was favourable to their views. Dizzy had succeeded in converting his colleagues, with the exception of Derby, who retired and was succeeded by Lord Salisbury as Foreign Secretary, to his neo-Imperialism in which an Asiatic Empire under British rule was an element. About this time, too, the secret convention relating to the lease of Cyprus was signed with the Porte. When, a month later, the Berlin Congress was called together, such was the suspicion with which the plenipotentiaries regarded each other that each ambassador was obliged, before entering the Congress, to affirm that he was not bound by any secret engagement with the Porte.

Disraeli and Salisbury both gave the required declaration. "It must be remembered," says Mr. Blunt indulgently, "that both were new to diplomacy." A few weeks later the *Globe* published the text of the Cyprus Convention, bought by that journal from one Marvin, an Oriental scholar, who had been imprudently employed as translator of the Turkish text. In London the authenticity of the document was denied, but the truth had to come out at Berlin. The discovery almost broke up the Congress. Prince Gortschakoff, the Russian representative, and M. Waddington, the Ambassador of France, both announced that they would withdraw at once from the sittings, and Waddington literally packed his trunks. It needed the cynical good offices of Bismarck to reconcile the English and the French plenipotentiaries.[1] There were two very significant points on which agreement was reached:

1. "That as a compensation to France for England's acquisition of Cyprus, France should be allowed on the first convenient opportunity, and without opposition from England, to occupy Tunis.

[1] I have taken this account of the Cyprus Convention and its results at the Berlin Congress from Mr. Blunt's *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*. He says in a footnote (*op. cit.*, p. 277): "I have given the story of the arrangement made with Waddington as I heard it first from Lord Lytton at Simla in May, 1879. The details were contained in a letter which he showed me written to him from Berlin, while the Congress was still sitting, by a former diplomatic colleague, and have since been confirmed to me from more than one quarter, though with variations. In regard to the main feature of the agreement, the arrangement about Tunis, I had it very plainly stated to me in the autumn of 1884 by Count Corti, who had been Italian Ambassador at the Congress. According to his account, the shock of the revelation to Disraeli had been so great that he took to his bed, and for four days did not appear at the sittings, leaving Lord Salisbury to explain matters as he best could. He said that there had been no open rupture with Waddington, the case having been submitted by Waddington to his fellow-ambassadors, who agreed that it was not one that could possibly be publicly disputed: *Il faut la guerre ou se taire*. The agreement was a verbal one between Waddington and Salisbury, but was recorded in a despatch subsequently written by the French Ambassador in London in which he reminded Salisbury of the Convention conversation held in Berlin, and so secured its acknowledgment in writing."

2. "That in the financial arrangements being made in Egypt, France should march *pari passu* with England."

This was the source of the Anglo-French condominium in Egypt.

Sir Rivers Wilson, who was then acting in Egypt as English Commissioner, received instructions to see that France should be equally represented with England in all financial appointments made in connection with his inquiry. Wilson's appointment as English Commissioner on the nominally International Commission of Inquiry was almost the first signed by Lord Salisbury on taking over the Foreign Office from Lord Derby. He was a man from whom much was expected. In 1878 he was appointed Finance Minister in Egypt. His predecessor, Ismail Sadyk, had been treacherously murdered by the Khedive Ismail, but this fact did not dash his confidence. He had great faith in Nubar, Ismail's Prime Minister. His French education would, he thought, enable him to preserve the Anglo-French character of the Ministry. He also had behind him the full interest and power of the house of Rothschild, whom he had persuaded to advance the loan of nine millions, known as the Kedival Domains Loan. But his brief career as Finance Minister (the Nubar Ministry was overthrown in the February of 1879) was a failure. It is the opinion of Mr. Blunt, and no one would have been more likely to know the true state of affairs, that the Khedive himself intrigued against him and that the internal policy of the country was entirely in the hands of Nubar, who, as a Christian, was at a disadvantage in governing a Mohammedan country, and in whose political value Wilson seems to have been greatly mistaken. The loan which he had negotiated did not relieve the taxpayer, but went in paying the more immediately urgent calls. His suggestion of a scheme which would have involved the confiscation by the Government of landed property to the value of fifteen millions disturbed the minds of the landowners, and the mistakes of the Ministry reached their

climax when the native army, including 2500 officers, was disbanded without receiving their arrears of pay.

The fall of Nubar was brought about by the *émeute* of February, 1879, skilfully engineered by the Khedive, and Sir Rivers's position as Finance Minister became very difficult. The Consul-General Vivian (afterwards Lord Vivian) was a personal enemy of his and refrained from smoothing his path, and when, in March, the crafty Ismail arranged a little incident at Alexandria similar to that of February, the Foreign Office, instead of backing his demand for redress, advised him to resign, which he accordingly did. Soon, however, he was able to take a crushing revenge on the perfidious Ismail. On his return from Egypt he went straight to the Rothschilds and explained to them that their money was in great danger, as the Khedive intended to repudiate the debt, sheltering himself behind the excuse of constitutional government. The Rothschilds brought financial pressure to bear first on Downing Street and the Quai d' Orsay. Their efforts in these quarters being in vain, they applied to Bismarck, who was, perhaps, not sorry to have an excuse to state the intention of the German Government to intervene in the bondholders' interests in case the French and English Governments were unable to do so. German intervention would have been a quite unendurable solution, and the Sultan was at once approached from London and Paris and begged to depose his vassal. European pressure was too much for him, and, in spite of the many millions which he had paid in bribery to the Porte, Ismail received a curt notice from Sir Frank Lascelles, then acting English diplomatic agent in Egypt, that a telegram had reached him from the Sultan announcing that his viceregal duties had passed to his son Tewfik. Ismail cleared the treasury of its current account and retired with a final spoil of some three millions sterling. No one hindered his departure.

For a few months after Mr. Gladstone formed his second administration things seemed to have quieted down in

Egypt. The new Khedive was a weak character and the country was practically governed by French and English Ministers in the Cabinet. Sir Evelyn Baring (afterwards Lord Cromer) and M. de Blaquières worked together in perfect harmony. Sir Evelyn Baring had originally come to Egypt as Commissioner of the Debt, and had worked so successfully towards a new settlement that when the question of the appointment of an English controller to advise the Khedive's Ministers arose, he was the person naturally indicated for the post. "Thus," as he says, "the various essential parts of the State machine were adjusted. A new Khedive ruled. The relations between the Khedive and his Ministers were placed on a satisfactory footing. A Prime Minister (Riaz Pasha) had been nominated who had taken an active part in opposing the abuses prevalent during the reign of Ismail Pasha. The relations between the Sultan and the Khedive had been regulated in such a way as to ensure the latter against any excessive degree of Turkish interference. The system which had been devised for associating Europeans with the Government held out good promise of success, inasmuch as it was in accordance with the Khedive's own views. Lastly, an International Commission had been created with full powers to arrange matters between the Egyptian Government and their creditors."[1] But, suddenly, as it seemed to those who had not been watching events on the spot, across this peaceful sky flashed the red meteor of rebellion, massacre, and arson.

It is no easy matter to estimate the character of Arabi Pasha. He seems, from even so friendly an account as that of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, not to have been particularly intelligent or particularly brave. It appears likely that he, at least, connived at the burning and loot of Alexandria. All this, however, would not have prevented his being a true patriot according to his lights. As Mr. Herbert Paul observes: "How far Arabi was a mutinous soldier guided by personal

[1] Herbert Paul, *A History of Modern England*, vol. iv., p. 247.

ambition and how far he was an enthusiastic patriot burning to free his country from a foreign yoke, would admit of an easier answer if one alternative excluded the other."[1] One thing, however, is certain. The movement he led was far more than the merely military revolt which Mr. Gladstone and everyone in England at first thought it; it was in fact a genuine Nationalist movement directed rather against the alien Turk than against the alien Englishman. That the truth of this is now generally admitted is principally due to Mr. Blunt and in a lesser degree to Mr. Labouchere and the group of extreme Radicals of which he was already beginning to be the unofficial leader in Parliament. During the spring and summer of 1882, Mr. Labouchere's first observations in the House of Commons on Egyptian affairs were of a thoroughly orthodox nature. On May 12 we find him asking the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Sir Charles Dilke) "whether any steps are being taken by Her Majesty's Government in view of the critical state of affairs in Egypt to maintain our influence in that country."[2] On July 27 he replies in a vein at once serious and sarcastic to Mr. McCarthy, who had made a speech in Arabi's favour. He thought that Mr. McCarthy had drawn on his imagination for the character of Arabi Pasha. They knew perfectly well that the most eminent men in the world were frequently great patriots; and they also knew that military adventurers always called themselves patriots in order to advance their own ends. They knew little of the career of Arabi Pasha, but they did know that he had designedly massacred Europeans in Alexandria, and had deliberately burnt down one of the noblest cities of his native land. What would be the effect of the vote[3] they proposed to give if it were successful? The English nation would have to withdraw entirely from their present position in Egypt, and the result would be that

[1] Herbert Paul, *A History of Modern England*, vol. iv., p. 247.

[2] *Hansard*, May 12, 1882, vol. 269.

[3] Vote of credit for forces in the Mediterranean.

we should have behaved in a contemptible manner in the face of Europe. India would not be worth one year's purchase. He was not a great believer in prestige; but if we were to retire after our men had been massacred our Empire in the East would not be worth a year's purchase. This speech, occupying eight columns of *Hansard*, aims at cutting away the relations between England and Turkey (which shows that even at so early a date Mr. Labouchere realised something of the true nature of the grievance of the Egyptian Nationalists) and upholding British intervention.[1] Labby among the prophets indeed!

After the retirement of Arabi from Alexandria, he issued a proclamation stating that "irreconcilable war existed between the Egyptians and the English, and all those who proved traitors to their country would not only be subjected to the severest penalty in accordance with martial law, but would be for ever accursed in the next world." Three more towns were plundered and the European inhabitants massacred. British public opinion was now thoroughly aroused, and probably no Government could have stayed in power without taking some overt action. The action taken by Mr. Gladstone's Government was very definite. On July 22 the Prime Minister obtained, by a majority of 275 to 19, a vote of £2,300,000. A force of 6000 men was sent to Egypt from India; 15,000 men were despatched to Cyprus and Malta. Sir Garnet (afterwards Viscount) Wolseley was placed in command in Egypt, "in support of the authority of His Highness the Khedive, as established by the Firmans of the Sultan and the existing international engagements, to suppress a military revolt in that country."

The French Government, while declining to co-operate with the British troops, assured Lord Granville of their moral support. In the month of September the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, in which the Egyptian army was completely routed, was fought. By this event British intervention was justified

[1] *Hansard*, July 27, 1882, vol. 272.

in the eyes of the world, and what became in the long run hardly distinguishable from British rule was established on the banks of the Nile. It was the battle of Tel-el-Kebir that convinced Mr. Labouchere of what would be, and in fact what came to be, the end of the course on which the Government was embarked, for he very soon sold his Egyptian shares. "They fell off his back like Christian's burden in *Pilgrim's Progress*, and Labby became an honest politician," said Mr. Wilfrid Blunt to me. The following letter to Sir Charles Dilke very clearly expresses his new views on Egyptian policy:

REFORM CLUB, October 10, 1882.

DEAR DILKE,—The great ones of the earth who, like you, live in Government Offices, never really understand the bent of public opinion. This is probably a dispensation of Providence by means of which Ministers are not eternal.

Personally, I should be glad to see the Liberal Party, after passing a Franchise Bill, sent about their business, and the country divided between Conservatives and Radicals. I speak, therefore, from the Radical standpoint, and viewing the matter from that point, I see that the dissatisfaction against your Egyptian policy is growing.

Arabi (like most patriots) was "on the make." His force consisted in siding with the Notables in their legitimate demands.

Now that the war is over, it is really impossible for Radicals to accept a policy based upon administering Egypt, partly for the good of its inhabitants, but mainly for the good of the bondholders. I am a bondholder, so it cannot be said that I am personally prejudiced against such a policy. But I am sure that it will not go down, and indeed that our whole course of action has been so tainted with it, that there will be great disaffection in the Radical ranks throughout the country unless the tree be now made to bend the other way.

You are now the man in possession in Egypt, so you can make terms with Europe. I would therefore humbly suggest that you should, after insisting upon an amnesty, call together the Notables and hand the country over to them, stipulating alone that there should be Ministerial responsibility, and the control of the purse.

The International Obligation of Egypt to pay its bondholders was *bon à professer*, when the Expedition had to be defended, but it is in reality a pure fiction. Moreover, if it were not, we cannot decently join in a holy alliance to maintain Khedives, and to deprive nations of what is the very basis of representative government.

Having handed Egypt over to the Notables, you can then go before Europe with a clean bill of health—propose that the connection of the country with Turkey shall be a purely nominal one and that, henceforward, no European power shall directly or indirectly interfere with its internal affairs.

At the same time, you ought to take advantage of your being in Egypt to establish yourself in some vantage post on the Suez Canal. This once done, Egypt separated from Turkey, and all European powers warned off, we remain in reality absolute masters of the position. Very probably the Egyptians will make a muddle of these finances, but this will no more affect us than the mistakes of Spanish finances affect our tenure of Gibraltar.

Controllers, a swarm of foreign bureaucrats, European administrators, Khedives ruling against the wishes of their subjects, an English army of occupation or an army commanded by my esteemed friend, Baker, composed of black ex-slaves, Ottoman cut-throats, and Swiss cowboys, are abominations, only equal to that of concerning ourselves with the payment of interest on a public debt. To attempt these things will be to keep open a perpetual Radical sore, and in the end will only land us in another expedition.

Pray excuse the observations of a humble admirer. The Jingoes, it is true, are not so hostile as they were, but you do not suppose that they would vote for the present Government, whilst on the other hand the Radicals will sulk and not vote so long as Radical principles are ignored in Egypt. Government has not yet announced its policy, so at present no great harm is done, but the appointment of Baker, the handing over of Arabi to the Khedive, the reign of Generals and diplomatists, the absence of any appearance of consulting the Egyptians, and various other similar things are producing distrust. You will say, "What can a fellah know of politics?" To this I can only answer,

"What does a Wiltshire peasant know about them?"—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere soon began to put forward his reformed views in Parliament. On October 30 we find him asking Sir Charles Dilke whether "Her Majesty's Government is a party to any treaty, alliance, or compact with any foreign power which would oblige it to prevent the Egyptians from exercising that control over their taxation, expenditure, and administration which is enjoyed by the inhabitants of the independent or semi-independent States which formerly were integral parts of the Ottoman Empire,"[1] and demanding information as to the cruelty and insults to which it was alleged the Egyptian prisoners had been subjected. Mr. Labouchere wrote a long article in *Truth* under the heading: "Egypt was glad when they departed" (Psalm cv., 38), the following extracts from which put the situation very clearly as he conceived it.

That a small body of English troops should remain for a brief time in Egypt at the expense of that country is, perhaps, a necessity of the position. But what I contend is, that during their stay the Notables ought to be called together, that every place of emolument ought to be filled up by an Egyptian, that the bag and baggage policy ought to be adopted towards the Turkish officials, who are as objectionable to the natives as were the Turkish officials to the Bulgarians, and that a free constitutional government ought to be established, based on the two corner stones of all constitutional liberty—Ministerial responsibility and the right of taxpayers over the purse. In order to carry out this programme—distasteful alike to professional diplomatists and to professional soldiers—we ought at once to send to Egypt a stalwart and experienced Liberal, who has graduated in the school of Parliamentary Government, and not in those of the Horse Guards, of the Foreign Office, or of the India Office. Looking round, I see no man better able to fill the post than Mr. Shaw

[1] *Hansard*, October 30, 1882, vol. 274.

Lefevre. He is able, he is a skilled and successful administrator, he is untainted with the creed that all Orientals are made to be bondsmen for Europeans, and his political principles are exceptionally sound.

What our diplomacy has to do is, to discover some means to render the high road to India through the Canal secure. Obviously we cannot do in this matter precisely as we should like, which would be to say that in time of peace all war vessels may pass through the Canal, and in time of war only ours. I hardly see how we can go beyond making the passage neutral in times of peace, and excluding from it in times of war the ships of belligerents. If Egypt were left to herself, I believe that she could very safely be left in charge of the Canal. Her people would be glad to be clear of all European complications, and, in case of war, she would occupy Port Said, and notify belligerents that their ships would not be allowed to pass."

On the question of India he expressed himself thus:

I am not at all of the "Perish India" school of politics. If it could be proved that our Empire would perish if we did not establish ourselves in Egypt, I am by no means certain but what I should be in favour of our establishment. But I am a believer not only in the justice, but in the expediency of an alliance with the people of a country, and not with its ruler against the people. Any intermixture in the internal affairs of Egypt on our part is not only opposed to Liberal principles, but opposed to English interests. To what has it already led? To a most costly military expedition; to our being arrayed against rights without which there can be no true liberty or sound government; to the slaughter of Englishmen and Egyptians with all the "pomp and pride of glorious war"; and lastly to our soldiers acting as retrievers, to hunt down and hand over to punishment to an Ottoman potentate, men many of whom — whether they were ambitious and whether they were ill-advised — had unquestionably a perfect right to fight in support of the principle that the only authority of their nation ought to be its representatives.[1]

[1] *Truth*, October 5, 1882.

A correspondent at once asked him: "How is it that you were in favour of the control and in favour of the Expedition, and yet now tell your readers that the control ought to cease, and that having by means of the Expedition established a firm foothold in Egypt, our next step ought to be to evacuate the country?" The following number of *Truth* delivered itself in reply as follows:

The Control, when first established, simply meant that Egypt should go into liquidation, and pay so much in the pound to its creditors, a couple of European controllers with half a dozen clerks, being appointed by the Egyptian Government to receive the composition from the Egyptian Treasury, and to hand it over to the various classes of bondholders. To this there could have been no sort of objection; but, little by little, this simple and semi-private arrangement was converted into a so-called international obligation on the part of the Egyptians to remain eternally divested from all control over their own expenditure, and to allow their entire financial administration to be placed in the hands of about 1300 Europeans, with salaries amounting to nearly £400,000 per annum, whilst the Controllers themselves had seats in the Cabinet, with a veto upon everything proposed by their Egyptian colleagues. France and England were the executive officers of this scheme. If the Egyptian officers had assented to it, nothing further was to be said, except that they were singularly and curiously wanting in patriotism. However we find now that they did not, and that we have been under an illusion. The Notables and the entire country were—to their credit be it said—opposed to it. Arabi took advantage of this feeling. He sided with the country, and at the same time made his bargain. "I," he practically said to the Notables, "support you in your rights; as a *quid pro quo* you must support me in what I am pleased to call the rights of the army—that is to say, that it shall be increased by 18,000 men." Without the army the Notables were powerless; they accordingly accepted the terms. We therefore find ourselves in the position that we were fully justified in asserting that Arabi was a self-seeking military adventurer, but that he was also the exponent of the legitimate

demands of the Egyptian people. The Control had become political—it was no longer a reasonable financial arrangement, but an unreasonable and improper attempt to deprive the Egyptians of their rights, in order to secure high salaries for a swarm of European locusts, and certainty of interest to European bondholders. Those, therefore, who had regarded it in its natural original conception, as fair and useful, have a perfect right to assert that this original conception had been so perverted that it had become a monstrous instrument for the suppression of all national vitality.

We, however, were tied to France. If we had not interfered, France probably would have done so. Moreover, we foolishly had pledged ourselves to maintain the Khedive in his position. The only way, therefore, to get out of the complication was to cut the Gordian knot; but, in order to do this, we were necessarily obliged to adopt the theory that Arabi was a mere military adventurer, who was attempting for his own ends to coerce not only the Khedive but the Egyptian people.

Our expedition, as was to be anticipated, has proved successful. Our troops hold Egypt. What then ought we to do? Obviously to hand it over to the Notables, who are the representatives of the Egyptian people, and to inform these Notables that we have no intention of repeating our previous error, but that, experience having shown us the fatal results of allowing ourselves little by little to be dragged into an attempt to manage other people's finances with a view to public creditors being paid interest, we shall leave Egypt and Egypt's creditors to settle their conflicting interests as they best please. This is the logical consequence of our having acted upon the assumption that Arabi was terrorising the Egyptians. . . .

It is evident to me, therefore, that the only policy which an English Liberal Ministry can adopt is to go before Europe with a proposal to make Egypt an Eastern Belgium, and to base our suggestion upon our own renunciation of interference in its internal affairs. I hear it said that the Liberal party is popular owing to its successes in Egypt. It may, perhaps, be for the nonce popular—or, to put it more correctly, not quite so unpopular—as it was with Jingoes, but these same Jingoes will not cease to vote for Conservatives. . . .

How then about the Canal? Well, I should base my policy upon that pursued in like cases by the United States. I should explain to Europe that the Canal is the connecting link between Great Britain and India, and that consequently the exigencies of geography and an enlightened self-interest render it absolutely necessary for us to be paramount there. There might be a little grumbling, but no one would go to war to hinder this, because its plain common-sense would be too obvious.[1]

In the meantime Arabi was lying in prison at Cairo awaiting his trial, and Mr. Labouchere took up his case energetically in the House of Commons. A military tribunal was to be charged with the trial, and it was no secret that the Khedive was determined that the death penalty should be inflicted on the heads of the rebellion. Mr. Wilfrid Blunt wrote, on September 1, a long letter to Mr. Gladstone, stating his intention of providing Arabi with an English counsel at his own expense and that of his friends, and hoping that "every facility will be afforded me and those with me in Egypt to prosecute our task." Mr. Gladstone, who was deeply hostile to Arabi, replied through his secretary, that "all that he can say at the present moment is that he will bring your request before Lord Granville, with whom he will consult, but that he cannot hold out any assurance that it will be complied with."

Mr. Labouchere continued to enquire into the Government's intentions towards Arabi in the House of Commons. A timely question on October 31 to Sir Charles Dilke secured the intervention of the press at the trial, and further questions on the following days forestalled the attempts of the Khedive to wriggle out of the conditions that Mr. Blunt's advocate had obtained from Mr. Gladstone. Arabi was, on December 4, condemned to death, and in spite of Mr. Gladstone's being at first inclined to let the law take its course, the sentence was commuted to banishment to Ceylon. Mr. Labouchere commented in *Truth* as follows: "The farce

[1] *Truth*, October 12, 1882.

of the rebel's condemnation to exile with retention of his rank and with a handsome allowance, is a fitting conclusion to the trial. I see it stated that Arabi will be invited to take up his residence in this or that portion of British territory. It need hardly be said that he may reside in any part of the world, outside Egypt, that he pleases. There is no existing law which enables us to detain an Egyptian in deference to the wishes of an Egyptian Khedive; and it is not likely that we shall ever consent to convert any portion of our territory into an international gaol, where all who are in disfavour with foreign rulers are to be deported, and restrained in their liberty."[1]

When Parliament met after Christmas, Mr. Labouchere seconded Sir Wilfrid Lawson's amendment to the Reply to the Speech from the Throne to the effect that no sufficient reason had been shown for the employment of British forces in reconstituting the Government of Egypt. It was certain, he said, that Arabi was supported by the entire Egyptian nation. He could quite understand why the Opposition did not challenge the policy of the Government. The Government were practically dragged into the war by the acts of the Opposition when in power. Anyone who read the Blue Books must see that. A great many Liberals and all the Radicals in the country regretted the Government plunging into the war. There could be no doubt that it was entered into for the sake of the bondholders and for that reason only. We were going to place the Egyptian army under an English General and a financier at the side of the Khedive, and then tell Europe that the Khedive was an independent ruler and that we had nothing to do with the Government of Egypt. Why were we there? For the single object of collecting the debts of the bondholders.[2]

He wrote to Mr. Chamberlain on January 9, 1883:

You people do not seem to have a very clear policy in Egypt. I cannot understand why you do not settle the French by adopt-

[1] *Truth*, December 7, 1882. [2] *Hansard*, February 15, 1883, vol. 276.

ing the line of "Egypt for the Egyptians" and convert the country into a sort of Belgium. If you can establish the principle that no one is to interfere, you have got all that you want.

To do this only two things are necessary:

1. Fair Courts of Justice where "meum and tuum" is recognised.

2. A Representative Assembly with a right to vote the Budget.

As regards the debt there are three loans, secured by special mortgages; two on land, and one on the railroads. Let the mortgagees take these securities, when the loans would be converted into companies, and the interest on them not be dependent upon any political arrangement. Rothschild has always told me that the domains, on which his loan of £400,000,000 is secured, are worth £400,500,000. By handing over to him the security, £500,000 would therefore be obtained.

As regards the General Debt (the United), it is a swindle, but without going into this it might be regarded as the general debt of the country, and the Egyptians, like any other nation, would be left to pay or not as they pleased.

The main swindle of the Goschen–Rivers–Wilson scheme was that the fellahs had paid £17,000,000 to free the land from a portion of the land tax after 1886. The law which partially liberated the land was abrogated, and, instead of the fellahs being treated like bondholders, although they had paid cash, whereas the latter had really paid about 20% on the value of the bonds, they were told that as a *quid pro quo* they would receive 1% on their £17,000,000 for fifty years. The Canal question is nonsense. If we hold the Red Sea we hold the Canal, in the sense that we can stop all traffic. If we are at war with a maritime power, either we should have the command of the Mediterranean or we should not. In the latter case, we should still by our hold on the Red Sea be able to close the Canal; in the former case we should be able not only to close it to others, but to use it for our own powers. Protocols and treaties are waste paper, they never hold against the exigencies of a belligerent; and, if we were at war with one maritime power, we should not have the others interfering to maintain our treaty rights, for, differing on many things, all continental powers regard us as the bullies

of the ocean. An English garrison at Port Said is a reality; as we are not likely to have one there, our best plan is to leave things alone, and, in the event of a serious maritime war, at once to occupy Port Said.

The interests of the Egyptian exiles also claimed Mr. Labouchere's attention. We find him in March putting searching questions as to their precise legal status, demanding satisfactory evidence of their support being adequately provided for, and enquiring why the Egyptian Government had unlawfully deprived Arabi of his title of Pasha.

In the debate of March 2 on a supplementary estimate of £728,000 "for additional expenditure for army services consequent on the dispatch of an expeditionary force to Egypt," he spoke with his accustomed frankness. He would like to know where the money was to come from. He had seen it stated in the papers and other organs that it was to be raised by an increase on the Income Tax. For his part, he should like to see it raised in one of two ways—one, by raising it from the landed interest—or, since he was afraid the Government would not accept that plan—in default, by a general tax on every individual in the country poor or rich. Let every one of those shrieking Jingoes who went out calling on the Government to go to war, now here and now there, understand that they would have to pay for the cost of those wars. Then he thought they would be less inclined than now to advance the Jingo policy which he was sorry to see had been adopted by the Government, and which they had inherited from gentlemen on the other side of the House. He believed that the war had been a mistake all through. If we went to Egypt at all we ought to have installed Arabi instead of the Khedive. He believed that as long as British troops supported the Khedive and supported him against his own subjects, England was absolutely responsible for what was going on in Egypt. No doubt Lord Dufferin did his best to procure trustworthy information, but he was

necessarily very much in the hands of the Europeans and of the Ministers and friends of the Khedive. He did not gather from the dispatches that Lord Dufferin had consulted the people of Egypt. Sir George Campbell, the member for Kirkcaldy, said that he had read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested Lord Dufferin's scheme of government. For his own part, although he had read, marked, and learned it to a certain degree he could not digest it because it was objectionable to a Radical stomach. Lord Dufferin's scheme was a perfect sham of constitutional government. If any species of representative government were established in Egypt it must be based on control of the purse. But when anything was said to the noble Lord, the Under-Secretary, on this subject, he vaguely alluded to representative government and international obligations. Was Lord Dufferin prevented from doing what he thought desirable for the country by any obligations which the Egyptians were supposed to be under to pay the interest on their debt? If there was any obligation on their part it was not our business to go there to carry it out. . . . He denied that the people of Egypt were bound by any such thing, but, supposing they were, it was not England's business to deprive them of the most elementary and necessary basis of representative government—the government of the purse.[1]

On June 11, he proposed the reduction of Lord Wolseley's grant from £30,000 to £12,000. What, he said, had Lord Wolseley done in Egypt? He went to Ismailia and from thence marched his men to Cairo. He took the straight road, and on the road he found a lot of miserable Arabs entrenched; he advanced and the Arabs marched away. That was the whole history of the exploit in Egypt.[2]

Lord Dufferin left Egypt in May, 1883. He was pleased with the success of his mission. To use his own words—"the fellah like his own Memnon had not remained irre-

[1] *Hansard*, March 2, 1883, vol. 276.
[2] *Ibid.*, June 11, 1883, vol. 280.

sponsive to the beams of the new dawn." He left Sir Edward Malet as Consul-General, and resumed his normal functions at Constantinople. He departed under a shower of compliments, and he left Egypt apparently prosperous. Arabi was an exile in Ceylon. Sherif Pasha was the Khedive's loyal and obedient Minister. Sir Archibald Alison was in command of the British garrison. The Egyptian army, about six thousand in number, was under the fostering care of Sir Evelyn Wood. Colonel Scott-Moncrieff directed the work of irrigation, and another Briton, Sir Benson Maxwell, superintended the native tribunals. Hitherto the British Government had made no mistakes, and Egypt had reaped only benefit from the intrusion of the foreigner. The false position in which England stood with full authority, ample power, and no legal right, had not yet led to any consequences of a serious and practical kind.[1]

Danger, was, however, creeping up to Egypt from the south. A vast, vaguely limited country, extending from Assouan to the Equator, and known as the Soudan, had been claimed as Egyptian territory by Ismail, who had appointed the famous Gordon Governor-General. On Ismail's fall in '79, Gordon was recalled and the Soudan fell a prey to local bandits. The reconstituted Egyptian Government was incapable of interference, and towards the end of '82 a Mussulman, Mohamed Ahmed, raised the standard of religious reform and rebellion against the distant and incapable Egyptian authorities. The Mahdi, or Messiah, as he called himself, took El Obeid and made himself master of Kordofan by the end of January, '83. In the summer of the same year seven thousand Egyptian troops, under the command of Hicks Pasha, a retired officer of the Indian army, who had entered the service of the Khedive, were dispatched against him by the Egyptian Government. Granville was careful to formally disengage the responsibility of the English Cabinet in this measure. It is certain, however, that he

[1] Herbert Paul, *A History of Modern England*, vol. iv.

could have prevented this action of the Khedive's Ministers, and, as he was perfectly well aware through the information of Colonel Stewart, who had been associated with Gordon's administration, of the utter impossibility of Hicks's task, it is difficult to acquit him of moral responsibility. "The faith in the power of phrases to alter facts," says Lord Milner in his *England in Egypt*, "has never been more strangely manifested than in this idea, that we could shake off our virtual responsibility for the policy of Egypt in the Soudan by a formal disclaimer." On November 5, the Egyptian force was cut to pieces near Shekan, about two days' journey from El Obeid, by the Mahdi at the head of forty thousand men, and Hicks and his staff died fighting at hopeless odds. On the advice of Sir Evelyn Baring, who had just arrived in Egypt from India, where he had filled the post of Financial Minister to Lord Ripon's Government, the English Cabinet recognised at last their responsibility. It was decided that the Soudan must be abandoned and that the Mahdi must be induced to allow the Egyptian garrisons, amounting to about forty thousand men, still remaining there, to retire.

Mr. Labouchere wrote to Mr. Chamberlain as follows on December 15, 1883: "I hope that we are not going to undertake the reconquest of the Soudan. The difficult position in which we are comes from not having broken entirely with the Conservative policy in Egypt. *They* might have annexed the country: we cannot, so we give advice which is not taken, try to tinker up an impossible financial situation, and make ourselves responsible for every folly committed by a gang of corrupt and silly Pashas. The result is that we are now told that we have a new frontier somewhere in the direction of the Equator, and that our honour is concerned, etc., etc. If the French are so foolish as to wish to acquire influence in the Soudan, I cannot conceive why we should seek to acquire it in order to prevent them. I believe that the Khedive and his friends are de-

lighted at what has occurred, because they hope that our evacuation will be put off; so long as we retain one soldier there, or indeed assume the part of bailiffs for the locusts who make money out of the country, something will always occur to force us to remain."

Mr. Chamberlain replied on December 18: "I do not think there is the slightest intention of engaging in any operations in the Soudan. The utmost we are likely to do is to undertake the defence of Egypt proper, and I hope there is no fear of that being attacked. I wish we could get out of the whole business, but I have always thought that, at the time we interfered, we really had no possible alternative. I am not Christian enough to turn the other cheek after one has been slapped, and we had unfortunately put ourselves in a position in which the first slap had already been administered. It is, however, a warning and a lesson to look a little more closely into the beginnings of things."

On the 20th Labouchere wrote again to Mr. Chamberlain: "From all I hear, matters are in a mess in Egypt. Tewfik is a weak creature, and he and his entourage intrigue against us, and yet intrigue to keep us there, as they are afraid of what may happen when we go. If the fellahs have any opinion, it is dislike of Tewfik as the puppet of 'foreigners.' The Mahdi will never attack Egypt proper, which is the valley of the Nile and the Delta. If we send more troops there, it will be the more difficult to evacuate. As long as we retain a corporal's guard, it will be the object of Tewfik and all the locusts to get up disturbances in order to compromise us. Surely it would be easy to come to an arrangement by which Egypt would be neutralised and left to itself: the reply always is that interest of the debt would not be paid and that, in consequence of the Law of Liquidation, some Power would interfere for the benefit of its Egyptian bondholders. But these worthy people must be comparatively few in numbers, and except as a pretext, no Power would think of taking up the cudgels for them, any more

than they did for Peruvian bondholders. The whole thing is a mere bugbear. Even if France did go there we should not suffer." To which Mr. Chamberlain replied on December 22: "I think I agree with you on all points of Egyptian policy, but my hands are so full just now that I have to let foreign affairs work themselves out, and to content myself with occasionally giving a push in the right direction."

Public opinion in England was deeply stirred by the disaster at Shekan, and one of those popular cries that are so often and so disastrously interpreted as heavenly voices went up all over the land. The nation called for Gordon. The question of Gordon's mission has been exhaustively discussed from every point of view. The responsibility for his failure and tragic death is apportioned by Lord Cromer between Gordon himself and the Government who overruled his (Cromer's) objection to employing him, and went on to make every mistake they could. Gordon misinterpreted his orders, and the Government was then made responsible for the consequences of a policy of which they had never dreamt. He thus placed himself in a situation from which it was impossible to extricate him in time. Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, on the other hand, places the responsibility of the tragedy principally at the door of Cromer. I am not here concerned with this delicate controversy. Of this at least there is no doubt, Gordon's mission was understood by the country and Parliament to be of a purely peaceful nature. Its avowed object was one which approved itself to Liberal ideas, *i.e.* the disengaging of British responsibility from a purely Egyptian matter and the rescue of the Egyptian garrisons. Radicals understood that these purposes were to be achieved by purely peaceful means. The Mahdi was presumably to be approached by recognised methods of negotiation. It is well known that when Gordon got to Khartoum, these instructions went by the board. He had been nominated, while on his way, at Cairo, Governor-General of the Soudan, and the Government left, by means

of supplementary clauses in their instructions, a considerable latitude to Baring under whose orders, at his (Baring's) request, Gordon was placed. Lord Cromer has told the world in his *Modern Egypt* of the difficulties of the situation. Gordon was a mystic and suffered chronically from "inspirations," which changed a dozen times a day. He does not seem to have made any attempt to carry out his mission by diplomatic methods. He soon came to conceive of that mission as a sort of rival "Mahdism." He became the Angel of the Lord fighting with Apollyon. All this must have been inexpressibly disconcerting to the prudent *homme d'affaires* at Cairo, and no less so to his nominal superior in Downing Street.

Mr. Labouchere's attitude in the matter was simple and consistent. On February 14, four days before Gordon started, the Opposition moved a vote of censure on the Government in consequence of the Hicks disaster, and were supported by several Radical members. Sir Wilfrid Lawson was supported by Mr. Labouchere in an amendment to Sir Stafford Northcote's motion: "That this House, whilst declining at present to express an opinion on the Egyptian policy which Her Majesty's Government have pursued during the last two years with the support of the House, trusts that in future British forces may not be employed for the purpose of interfering with the Egyptian people in their selection of their own Government."[1] On February 25, by which time news of the conquest of Tokar by Osman Digna, the ablest of the Mahdi's lieutenants, had reached England, Mr. Labouchere asked the Secretary for War whether it was within the discretion of General Graham to advance beyond Suakim against Osman Digna. Hartington replied oracularly that that appeared to him a question highly undesirable to answer and that the general object of Graham's instructions had been already stated to the House.

[1] *Hansard*, February 14, 1884, vol. 284.

Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's Diary for April 4, 1884, records the following conversation with Mr. Labouchere: "Lunched with Labouchere. He is more practical, and we have discussed every detail of the policy to be suggested to Gladstone. He will feel the ground through Herbert Gladstone, which is his way of consulting the oracle. He told me the history of Gordon's mission. Gordon's idea had been to go out and make friends with the Mahdi, and to have absolutely nothing to do with Baring or the Khedive, or with anybody in Egypt. He was going to Suakim straight, where he counted upon one of the neighbouring Sheiks, whose sons' lives he had saved or spared, and his mission was to be one entirely of peace. But the Foreign Office and Baring caught hold of him as he passed through Egypt, and made him stop to see the Khedive, and so he was befooled into going to Khartoum as the Khedive's lieutenant. Now he had failed altogether in his mission of peace, and the Government had recalled him more than once in the last few days, but he had refused to come back. Gladstone had decided absolutely to recall all the troops in Egypt when Hicks' defeat was heard of, and was in a great rage. The expedition to Suakim had been forced upon him by the Cabinet, and Hartington had taken care to give Graham no special instructions, so that he might fight without orders. This Graham, of course, had done, and Gladstone, more angry still, had gone down to sulk at Coombe. Now he would stand it no longer, and he had let Hartington in by the speech he had made last night. Nobody expected it. Labouchere thought the moment most favourable for a new move."[1] And on May 19 Mr. Labouchere asked in the House: "Whether, for the satisfaction of those who believe that it has never been brought to the knowledge of the Mahdi and of the Soudanese who are engaged in military operations what the object of the mission of General Gordon is, he will consider the feasibility of conveying to them that Her Majesty's Government,

[1] Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Gordon and Khartoum.*

in sending an English General to the Soudan, only desired to effect by peaceful means the withdrawal of the Egyptian troops, employés, and other foreigners who many wish to leave the country, and whether he will take steps to enter into diplomatic relations with the Mahdi, or whomsoever else may be the governing power in the Soudan, in order to prevent if possible all further effusion of blood, to establish a fixed frontier between Egypt and the Soudan, and to effect an arrangement by which General Gordon and those who may wish to accompany him will be enabled peaceably to withdraw from the Soudan."[1] Mr. Gladstone replied to Mr. Labouchere's question, finishing his remarks with these words: "Whatever measures the Government take will be in the direction indicated by the question—to make effective arrangements with regard to putting all the difficulties at an end."

Mr. Labouchere, to whom, as a Radical and a Nationalist, the position of the Mahdi appealed, did not confine himself to work in Parliament. Mr. Wilfrid Blunt was attempting to negotiate with Mr. Gladstone to stop the war, which had followed Gordon's death, and had taken Mr. Labouchere into his confidence. Mr. Labouchere wrote to Mr. Blunt on February 20, 1885, as follows:

DEAR BLUNT,—I had a talk with H(erbert) G(ladstone) last night. He wants to know what evidence can be given—that the man who came to me was Arabi's Minister of Police at Cairo, and what was his name—and that the Mahdi's man *is* the Mahdi's man. It is clear that so far he is right. If the latter has no credentials he should get them. Let us assume that he either has them or can get them. Then there must be a basis of terms. I would suggest then that the Soudan, with the exception of the Port of Suakim, be recognised as an independent state under, if wished, the suzerainty of the Sultan, and that all Egyptian Pashas who wish to leave it be allowed to leave it.

If the credentials hold water, and if these terms are agreed to,

[1] *Hansard*, May 19, 1884, vol. 288.

then the Mahdi's man should write them out and say that he will agree to them.

But it is very essential that nothing should be known about the matter. I should have to work others in the Cabinet, and, if necessary, to appeal to Parliament. Clearly we could not send a mission to the Mahdi, but if an agreement were come to, an emissary from the Mahdi and one from our Government might meet for details. What I want is to establish a discussion with the Mahdi—the rest would follow.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

P.S.—You see, if something is to be done to stop this war, we must leave the vague, and come to hard and fast facts.

In elucidation of the above letter Mr. Blunt writes to me on February 20, 1913: "The person referred to in your uncle's letter of February 20, 1885, is clearly Ismail Bey Jowdat, who acted as Prefect of Police at Cairo during the war of 1882. . . . Later he came to London in connection with negotiations I was attempting to get entered into by Gladstone with the Mahdi, through Sezzed Jamal ed Din, as to which I was in communication with your uncle. . . . I had, no doubt, sent Jowdat to your uncle, and, at one time, it seemed as if we were likely to succeed in getting a mission sent or negotiations of some kind entered into to stop the war. . . . Jowdat was never himself an agent of the Mahdi, but he was for the time with Jamal ed Din, who was in communication with Khartoum. . . ."

Communication with the Mahdi was apparently not easy, for we find Mr. Labouchere writing again to Mr. Blunt the following month (March 4, 1885):

It appears to me that there will be a pause in our Soudan operations. It might therefore be desirable to take advantage of this in order to learn on what terms an agreement might be come to between us and the Soudanese. Those in Parliament who, like myself, see no reason why we should interfere in the internal affairs of that country would be greatly strengthened, were we to know the precise views of the Mahdi.

I would therefore suggest to you that, if possible, his agent should let us know definitely, and after conversation with the Mahdi, whether the latter would agree to the following terms:

1. The recognition on the part of England of the independence of the Soudan, and of the Mahdi as its ruler.

2. The Northern frontier of the Soudan to be drawn at or near Wady Halfa; the Eastern frontier to exclude Suakim and the coast.

3. The Mahdi to pledge himself not to molest any Soudanese who have taken our side, and to allow all who wish to leave the country to do so.

4. The Mahdi to receive a Consular and Diplomatic Agent at Khartoum; to allow all foreigners to carry on their business unmolested in the Soudan.

5. The establishment of some sort of Consular Courts.

6. If possible some clause with regard to the export of slaves forbidding it.

It is our object to meet the assertion of the Government that the Mahdi is a religious fanatic with whom it is impossible to treat, because he does not regard himself, alone, as the temporal ruler of the Soudan, but as a spiritual leader of Islam against Christianity—a species of Oriental Peter the Hermit. What we want to show is that he is the proper ruler of the Soudan, and that, whilst it will be open to any one outside that country to regard him as a prophet, he seeks to establish no temporal sway beyond the Soudan. If the Mahdi would declare his assent to the above terms, I am convinced that popular feeling here, and the real wishes of the members of the Government, would soon bring this war to a close, and that in a very short time we and the Mahdi would be the best of friends.

It seems unlikely that the terms laid down in this letter were suggested by Mr. Labouchere without consultation with Mr. Herbert Gladstone.

He missed no opportunity in Parliament of fighting the good fight of Radical principles. At one moment he is pointing out the two cardinal heresies in the policy of the Government—one political and the other financial: "The

political heresy is that we insist on putting up the Khedive and maintaining him in power against his subjects. The result is that we are absolutely hated in Egypt, and wherever we are not hated we are regarded with contempt." The financial heresy is that "we always insist in our treatment of Egyptian finance that the payment of interest on the debt should come first, and the expenses of administration second. The result of this policy is over-taxation, the postponement of reform, and a deficit."[1] The policy of the Liberal Government was in reality, though not in profession, he asserted, Jingo policy, and the Radicals who had worked for Mr. Gladstone's return to power, relying on his Midlothian speeches, had been jockeyed. If only Mr. Gladstone would take his (Labouchere's) advice. No doubt the Prime Minister when thinking the matter over would say—Why did I not follow the member for Northampton? I should not have been in such a mess as I am now. For his own part Mr. Labouchere stood by the policy of the Midlothian campaign, when the Prime Minister denounced the Jingo policy of annexation and war. If any one had then said: "You will acquire power and become the most powerful Minister England has had for many a day; you will bombard Alexandria; you will massacre Egyptians at Tel-el-Kebir and Suakim, and you will go on a sort of wild-cat expedition into the wilds of Ethiopia in order to put down a prophet"—the right honourable gentleman would have replied in the words of Hazael to the King of Syria—"Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"[2]

This kind of sword-play went on day after day in the House, and it is impossible to doubt that, although Mr. Labouchere was unquestionably sincere in deploring the policy of the Government, he must have greatly enjoyed the opportunity which it afforded him of displaying his wit and humour. Mr. Gladstone did not always appreciate these

[1] *Hansard*, March 26, 1885, vol. 295.
[2] *Ibid.*, Feb. 27, 1885, vol. 294.

qualities, and on one occasion, when Mr. Labouchere was attempting to divide the House against the Government, his object being, as he said, "not adverse to the Government, but to strengthen the good intentions of the Prime Minister in future," that much enduring statesman turned and solemnly rebuked him for making an "inopportune and superficial speech."[1]

The case against the Government from the Radical point of view was, of course, very obvious and easy to put, nor was there anything particularly original about Mr. Labouchere's arguments. He rang the changes incessantly on three points: the essential injustice of our position in Egypt towards the Egyptians—the underlying venality of the Government's position owing to their connection with the bondholders—and the monstrous expense to the British taxpayer of British military intervention. It was not the matter of his charges, but the manner in which he made them that delighted the House. Sometimes he would lay aside his dialectical weapons and let the facts speak for themselves. One day he asks the Secretary for War if his attention has been drawn to the following statements in the *Times* of May 7:

> Daylight broke almost imperceptibly. We were nearer the village of Dhakool, when the friendly scouts came running in with the news that the inhabitants were at prayer, and that if we attacked at once we should catch them. General Graham pushed on with a troop of the Bengal Lancers. . . . The enemy fled on camels in all directions, and the Mounted Infantry and Camel corps, coming up, gave chase. Some two hundred attempted to stand, and showed a disposition to come at us, but evidently lost heart and disappeared, not before having at least twenty men killed. . . . It was curious to witness the desperate efforts of the enemy to drive their flocks up the steep mountain side, turning now and again to fire on the Bengal Lancers. The "Friendlies" tried to cut off the flocks, and succeeded in catching

[1] *Hansard*, April 13, 1885, vol. 296.

some thousands of animals. . . . The village was looted and burnt. . . . We also destroyed the well with gun-cotton. . . . But, for our being unaware of the existence of some narrow hillock walks up which the enemy retired, we might have exterminated them. Our loss has been hitherto only two Mounted Infantry men wounded. . . . We have done the enemy all the harm we could, thus fulfilling the primary object of war.

Lord Hartington could find nothing to say, but that such incidents were unfortunately inseparable from war.[1]

It may be doubted, however, whether Mr. Labouchere's advocacy did very much for his cause, or for his own reputation as a serious politician. The British public (and the House of Commons is a sort of microcosm of the British public) finds it hard to believe in sincerity accompanied by banter and persiflage. Not so are Englishmen wont to express their conscientious convictions. Mr. Labouchere was, of course, not an Englishman. He was a Frenchman and, as I have said before, in his mentality a lineal descendant of Voltaire. He could hardly hope to succeed where John Bright had failed.

That Mr. Labouchere's attitude on the subject of Egypt was appreciated by the Egyptians is proved by a perusal of the letters he received from Arabi in exile, long after the subject had ceased to be a stone on which the Radical axe could be ground. I append some of these, and another letter from Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Wilfrid Blunt on the subject of the Exiles.

COLOMBO, September 15, 1891.

MY DEAR SIR,—I beg the liberty to trouble you with this in the hope of your being able to learn more of the state of our health than you have been hitherto. One of the most eminent medical practitioners in Ceylon, Dr. Vandort, left for England in the last week in the German mail steamship *Preussen*. I have asked him to call on you and Sir William Gregory and inform you of

[1] *Hansard*, May 8, 1885, vol. 298.

the actual state of such of us as he has attended on. By the death of Dr. White we lost our best evidence, and it pleased those in authority not to heed at all the opinion of our regular medical advisers and to rely on that of gentlemen who, whatever their high standing and attainments, had but one opportunity of seeing us. Had they questioned also those who attended on us and our families for years they might have been better able to form an opinion.

I am now suffering very much from my eyes, being scarcely able to read anything, and am waiting until an oculist from Madras could examine them and tell me what I may expect.

Pray forgive me for troubling with this letter. We have so few of your kind feelings and position to look up to—and if we are too importunate we would only beg to be pardoned.

In the hope that you are in the enjoyment of the blessing of health, and begging the kind acceptance of all respectful regards—I remain, yours most obediently,

A. Arabi, the Egyptian.

Colombo, December 9, 1891.

My dear Sir,—I had the great pleasure to receive your kind letters of the 2d and 8th October, and should have replied earlier but for having had to communicate with my brethren in exile, and for there being time before the next meeting of Parliament. We beg your kindly acceptance of our grateful thanks.

We have been officially informed of the decision of H. M.'s Government on our memorial to Lord Salisbury, but for which we were prepared by yourself and Sir William Gregory; and also by Lord de la Warr, who very kindly sent to me copies of the papers (Egypt, No. 1, 1891), printed for both Houses of Parliament, in March last, and of his speeches and Lord Salisbury's reply in May and June last. I now send copies as requested of the medical certificates had by Toulba Pasha and the late Abdulal Pasha since the memorial, also the Colonial Secretary's letter to us and my reply. [All these were enclosed with this letter.]

You will permit me to ask your notice of Riaz Pasha's Memorandum of July 9, 1890, to the Foreign Office concluding with: "H. M's Government should in any case remember that the exiles were pardoned and allowances granted to them on the express

condition that they should remain at some distant spot, such as the island of Ceylon." On this rather qualified assertion it would quite do to refer to Mr. Broadley's book *How we Defended Arabi and his Friends*, where the terms of the arrangement which put an end to the proceedings in connection with our "trial" will be found. Mr. Broadley and Mr. Napier could not, as I cannot, in honour reveal more than they have done, but my steadfast friend, Mr. Blunt, was not so constrained to be reticent, and his communications to the *Pall Mall Gazette* showed what even the great noble-minded General Gordon believed the nature and extent of our exile to be.

We should not perhaps however complain of our not being permitted to end our days in the land of our birth, although what harm that, or our being in Cyprus, could now do I cannot conceive. That none of us have desired or sought in the least to be disloyal to our parole the testimony of Sir Arthur Gordon to our conduct should be sufficient. If all my correspondence, family and other, for the last nine years were read, or any of the hundreds of my visitors, from every part of the world, were questioned, nothing would there be to show the least wish to disturb or stay the progress of my loved native land since my poor efforts failed.

If you would kindly refer to Mr. Broadley's book you will find Lord Dufferin's scheme in 1883 for the reorganisation of my country, and my views on Egyptian reform in 1882. After nine years, when almost the whole of that scheme and so many of my humble views have been successfully carried out, is it possible that any one beyond my personal enemies in my own country could deem me capable of even dreaming of doing anything to see her in misery again? My greatest trust is yet what it was when I wrote to the *Times* from my prison in 1882: "I hope the people of England will complete the work which I commenced. If England accomplishes this task, and thus really gives Egypt to the Egyptians, she will then make clear to the world the real aim and object of Arabi the Rebel" (Mr. Broadley's book, p. 349). I cannot hope to see the time, but it must come under such auspices when Egypt will cease to be a "reproach to the nations," Islam although she be.

My fellow exiles and I have considered much on the subject

of the parole you suggest in regard to Cyprus. Our simple parole was all that Lord Dufferin required of us when exiled. We gave it, and he was satisfied. We have honourably kept our word, and it is only now, when we find our place of sojourn proving so increasingly injurious to the health of most of us and our families, that we pray for a change to a more congenial climate. In every other respect we could not dream nor hope for a better home of exile. We leave everything to your judgment. If you think a repetition of our parole necessary, or of any use, we shall gladly give it again, although our first, religiously observed, has been so slighted; and we shall send it to you as soon as you may desire it. You have done much for us, and our return for it all could only be gratefully felt, not expressed; and you will permit us to leave it to you to do for us whatever more in your judgment may be expedient, and, whatever that may be, permit us to assure you of our fullest trust.

If any prospect of the change of residence we seek is hopeless, and Lord Salisbury should adhere to his wish to keep us here, I may but beg your best endeavour to obtain the increase of allowance I have applied for in my letter to the Colonial Secretary, to enable me to have the benefit of such change as the variable climate of this island could in some degree afford.

I had the pleasure last week of two kind visits by Mr. J. R. Cox, M.P., on his return home from Australia in the *Orizaba*. He mentioned your request and his promise to see me if he came to Colombo, and your desire that he should learn from me all I had to say; and he asked me to give him a statement, which I have done to the best of my ability both by word of mouth and in writing. He said he had been long away, and had not seen the papers Lord de la Warr sent me until then. I need not say how deeply gratifying it was to hear from him of your interest in us and of your exertions on our behalf, and of the wide feelings of sympathy you have raised for us.

You will forgive me for trespassing on your time and work with this long letter; and if I have been led to say anything that I have troubled your attention with before, I may only beg the extension of your indulgence for it. Placed as I am now, able to think only of the past, and with no hope for life's future on earth, and deprived more and more of my greatest solace, study,

by the growing weakness of sight, I fear that my communications to you and to those who have likewise generously extended sympathy to us in our strait are of too melancholy a tinge. As any prospect of better days seems all but closed to us, we may but bow in humble resignation and submission to the Divine Will. When this letter comes to you it will be your great season of joy and peace. Permit me and my family to offer you our best regards and wishes for many a happy enjoyment together and return of the things to you and all dear to you.—And believe me, yours most gratefully and sincerely,

AHMED ARABI, the Egyptian.

5 OLD PALACE YARD, S. W., Feb. 1, 1893.

MY DEAR BLUNT,—Jingoism under Rosebery reigns supreme. I will, however, see if anything can be done about Arabi. Your details are very interesting respecting the late events in Egypt. Cannot the Khedive be induced to do this?: Get his Chamber to pass a resolution declaring that Egypt wishes for independence of all European intervention, and trusts that the British occupation will cease. If it did this we should be able to meet the persistent statements that the Fellaheen wants us and loves us. The Turkish Pashas might agree so as to spite us, but if once the country were left to itself, the Chamber could assert (?) itself.

It is difficult to say how long the Government will last. Probably through the session.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

CHAPTER X

HENRY LABOUCHERE'S RADICALISM

BEFORE dealing further with the part played by Labouchere in Irish legislation, it will be necessary to consider his view of English politics as a whole. He had not at first been an enthusiastic partisan of Home Rule. He had even gone the length at Northampton of saying that he himself was no Home Ruler. Yet, in point of fact, no English member was a more zealous advocate of Irish claims than he. Why was this? His motives, as I have been able to gather them from many conversations with him on the subject, were twofold: His Radical soul was disgusted by what, in the face of the Irish attitude, was the only alternative to Home Rule, namely coercion, and he realised that the only effective way to "dish the Whigs," whom he hated even more than the Conservatives, was to use the Irish vote.

The second motive was by far the stronger. He had a definite conception of Radical government to which he would undoubtedly have sacrificed hecatombs of Irish patriots if necessary. As a matter of fact, the Irish patriots happened to be a useful means towards his end, the establishment of such a government. Hence his alliance with them. When Mr. Gladstone and his Whig-Radical Government were faced in 1880 with the Irish question in so acute a form, Labouchere saw a real possibility ahead of establishing a Radical as distinguished from a merely Liberal

Government. The protagonist of his scheme was Mr. Chamberlain, already a member of the Cabinet, and, in the natural course of events, the almost certain successor of the already venerable statesman whose name had become the war-cry of English Liberalism.

With Mr. Chamberlain as Prime Minister almost anything might happen: the Lords and the Church might go, England might become, in all save the name, a republic. Mr. Chamberlain was the one statesman with whom he found himself in complete agreement as to the articles of the Radical faith, and in his future he saw the future of the party and of England. He wrote to him on July 3, 1883: "I was caught young and sent to America; there I imbibed the political views of the country, so that my Radicalism is not a joke, but perfectly earnest. My opinion on most of the institutions of this country is that of Americans—that they are utterly absurd and ridiculous. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see you leader of the House of Commons, with a Parliament pledged to the most drastic reforms. This is the aim of my humble endeavours, but, in the nature of things, a member below the gangway has not the same responsibilities as a Minister, and, if he is a Radical, necessarily is more advanced than a composite Cabinet. He has, too, to make motions or to hold his tongue. For instance, my amendment yesterday evening on titles was regarded in the House of Commons as a joke. But go to any meeting of even Liberals, and you would find that it was essentially a popular one. The real trouble in the House of Commons is that the Radicals below the gangway are such a miserable lot, and seem ashamed of their opinions. The Whigs, on the contrary, out of office act solidly together. This leads the public to suppose that your views are in a small minority in the House of Commons. If the Whigs are ready to pull a coach half way to what they consider a precipice, they must be greater fools than I take them to be. They do not act openly, but they conspire secretly. So long,

however, as they consent to work in harness, they ought to be encouraged. You have told them the goal, and I am certain that this declaration has done more to strengthen radicalism than anything that has happened for long. So I am perfectly contented, and quite ready to leave well alone."

Alas for the schemes of mortals! The very element on which Labouchere relied for the strengthening of the Radical cause in the Cabinet was to prove to Mr. Chamberlain himself the parting of the ways. The statesman who was to reach the highest power on the shoulders of Irish voters, when it came to the point, would have none of such support. The corner-stone fell out of the grandiose edifice that Labouchere had planned, the palace of Armida crumbled in the dust. Bitter, indeed, was his disappointment. It was characteristic of him in these circumstances to lose his head and throw up the game. The reader will remember how, as a boy, he described his own character at the gaming-table: "In playing even I failed because, although I theoretically discovered systems by which I was likely to win, yet in practice I could command myself so little that, upon a slight loss, I left all to chance." He lacked the patience or the industry of mind to reconstruct his schemes, and when Mr. Chamberlain was lost to the Radical party, Labouchere's constructive imagination seems never to have recovered the blow. He continued the war with abuse of privilege, absurdity consecrated by tradition, and the other heads of the hydra with which his party fought, but the tone of his attacks was not the same as before the Home Rule split. Too often they degenerated into mere party criticism, the note of personal invective, one might almost say of spite, becoming more prominent in them. He had lost faith in success, because the combination by which he had hoped to win had failed, and he could not, or would not, think out another. It was this consciousness of failure—of personal failure as he saw it, so closely had he identified himself with

his hopes—that inspired the peculiar bitterness with which, in and out of season, he attacked the statesman whom he held responsible for the altered situation. He did not, as his correspondence will show, give up hope for some time of Mr. Chamberlain's return to the party, but, when he had at last given up all such hope, nothing was too bad for "Joe." In the pages of *Truth*, in the Reform Club, in the lobby of the House of Commons, he constantly held forth to all who would read or listen on the "crimes" of the man who had divided the Liberal party against itself. He manifested no such bitterness against Bright or Hartington; but when Mr. Chamberlain fell from grace, he fell as no private individual, but as the symbol of the Radical party. With him, according to Labouchere, the party fell, and with the party his immediate hopes for the regeneration of England. Those hopes had, with ample justification for their existence, run high when Messrs. Chamberlain and Dilke joined Mr. Gladstone's administration in 1880. Labouchere based his scheme on the permanence of Mr. Chamberlain's Radicalism, and upon the fact that, in the natural course of events, a successor would very shortly have to be found for Mr. Gladstone. Both these, at the time, reasonable previsions were falsified by destiny. Mr. Gladstone remained for another fourteen years leader of the party, and Mr. Chamberlain became a Liberal Unionist. The years between 1880 and 1887 were, in so far as his political life was concerned, the most important of Labouchere's life. Until he saw that his game was finally spoiled by a totally unexpected fall of the cards, he did not for one instant relax his efforts to reach the end towards which he had planned to work. His patience was remarkable, his foresight uncanny, except in the all-important direction from which the blow that finally shattered his hopes descended.

It is interesting, in the light of subsequent events, to read the article which he wrote for the February number of the *Fortnightly Review* in 1884, in which he set forth with

characteristic freedom of expression his views upon Radicals as differing from Whigs. "A Radical," he declares early in the article, "has been defined as an earnest Liberal," and he goes on to describe, in uncompromising terms, the faith of the earnest Liberal—or true Radical. "The Government Bill," he wrote, "assimilating the County to the Borough Franchise is to be encouraged, although it does not go far enough, to the extent, *i.e.*, of Adult manhood suffrage. It will be for Radicals to take care strenuously to oppose every scheme which is a sham and not a reality. Let us all who are good Liberals labour to obtain a good suffrage Bill and a good redistribution Bill. This will strengthen our Parliamentary position, and we may fairly anticipate that Manhood Suffrage, electoral districts, triennial Parliaments, and payment of members will follow." The following extract shows very clearly Mr. Labouchere's opinions on what may be called the technique of legislation:

"The life of a Parliament is too long. Three years is the maximum period for which it should be elected. At the end of this time it is out of touch with the electorates. Promises and pledges made at the hustings are evaded, because each member thinks they will be forgotten before he has again to seek the suffrages of his electors; whilst Ministers are too apt to put off, until the period for a fresh election approaches, any drastic legislation to which they are pledged as leaders of their party. It is probable that, were the duration of Parliament limited to three years, as much political legislation would take place in this period as is now the case in the five or six years which is the average life of a Parliament. The fear of a speedy reckoning with electors would be ever before the eyes of Ministers and members. The 'Can't you leave it alone?' of Lord Melbourne would be replaced by 'We must do much and do it speedily, for the day of reckoning is near at hand.' Long Parliaments are as fatal to sound business as long credits are to sound trade. It is questionable, indeed, whether

three years is not too long for the duration of a Parliament. We should move in all probability more quickly, were the nation to insist upon an annual stocktaking."

The arguments, from the democratic point of view, in favour of the payment of members are thus set forth:

"The payment of members would do more to democratise our legislature, and consequently our legislation, than any other measure that can be conceived. At present, members, as a rule, are rich men. Many of them mean well, but they fatally take a rich man's view of all matters, and are far too much inclined to think that everything is for the best in a world where, although there may be many blanks, they at least have drawn a prize in life's lottery. So long as the choice of the poor men is between this and that rich man, so long will our legislation run in the groove of class prejudice. The poor man will not be the social equal of the rich man, and our laws will be made rather with a view to the happiness and interests of the few than of the many. All who are Conservative in heart know this, and for this reason the payment of members, which is the natural outcome of a recognition that a labourer is worthy of his hire, finds in them such bitter opponents. If a Minister is paid for being a Minister, it is only logical that a member should be paid for being a member. People must live. To refuse payment to members is to limit the choice of electorates to those very men who are not likely to see things with the same eyes as the majority of the men who constitute the electorates. Parliaments should be composed of rich men and of poor men. No one would advocate the exclusion of rich men. Why, then, should a condition of things continue which practically results in the exclusion of the poor man?"

Never has the Radical view of the House of Lords and the Crown been more forcibly expressed than in the following:

"The Whigs seem to know that——is in favour of the abolition of a House of hereditary legislators. Let us hope that they are correct. We are frequently told that the

people love, honour, and respect the House of Lords. Let any one who entertains this notion allude to this assembly at a popular political gathering in any part of the country, and he will find his illusion rudely dispelled. There are earnest Radicals who hold that there ought to be two legislative Chambers, and not one; although why they think so, it is difficult to say, for in every country where the two-Chamber system prevails, either one of them has become a mere useless court of registration, or the two are engaged in perpetual disputes, to the great detriment of public business. No Radical, however, is in favour of our existing Upper Chamber. If he were, he would not be a Radical. What an hereditary legislator ought to be is well described by Burke in his letter to the Duke of Bedford. What our hereditary legislators are we know by bitter experience. They almost all belong to one particular class—that of the great landlords. When any attempt is made to deal with the gross absurdities of our land system, they rally almost to a man to its defence, not from natural depravity, but from the natural bias of every one to consider that what benefits him must be for the best. The majority of them are Conservatives; even those who call themselves Liberals are the mildest of Whigs. When a Conservative Administration is in power they are harmless for good or evil. When a Liberal Administration is in power they are actively evil. Such an administration represents the deliberate will of the nation. Before bringing in a Bill, however, it has to be toned down, lest it should meet with opposition in the Lords. Nevertheless it does meet with opposition there. The Lords do not throw it out, but emasculate it with amendments; then when it comes back to the Commons a bargain is struck that, if the Commons will agree to some of these amendments, the Lords will not insist upon the others. Thus, no matter what may be the majority possessed by a Liberal ministry in the House of Commons, it can never legislate as it wishes, but in a sense between what it wishes and what the Conserva-

tive majority in the Lords wish. In great and important questions it almost always obeys its Leader like a flock of sheep, and thus one man is able to provoke a dissolution, not only when he thinks that this is in the interests of the country, but when he imagines it to be in the interests of his party. It is asserted that the House of Lords is useful because its rejection of a Bill is an appeal to the country against a House of Commons which is acting in opposition to the popular will. It is not easy to understand on what grounds the Lords are supposed to know what the popular will is; and, indeed, they never do, for there is not one single case on record where, when the Lords have appealed to the country against a decision of the House of Commons, the verdict has gone in favour of the former. Although rich, the peers are not independent. They are, in fact, remarkable for their abnormal greed. Because they are by the chance of birth legislators, they insist upon decorations, distinctions, and salaries being showered upon them and their relations. In the Financial Reform Almanack for this year there is an interesting calculation of the amounts that living dukes, marquises, and earls, and their relations, and those that have died since 1850, have received out of the public exchequer. The dukes figure for £9,760,000, the marquises for £8,305,950, and the earls for £48,181,292; total £66,247,242. The voracity of a vestryman is nothing to compare with that of the British nobleman. Eighty-three peers are privy councillors; 55 have received decorations; 192 are connected with the army and navy; 62 are railway directors; their total rental is £11,872,333, and they possess 14,251,132 acres; yet in pay and pensions they absorb annually £639,865, and whenever there is a change of administration they clamour for well-paid sinecures about the Court, and other such sops, like a pack of hungry hounds. *Les soutiens de l'État* indeed! *Comme une corde soutient un pendu!* The greater number of them are obscure thanes, who never take an active part in legislation or attend in their

seats; and they are summoned to London by their party leader whenever it is necessary to vote down some Liberal enactment, which has been passed after long and careful consideration by the elected representatives of the nation, and for this service to the State they generally insist upon receiving an equivalent—a ribbon, a Lord Lieutenancy, or an office for a relative or a dependent. . . .

"Radicals are essentially practical, and are not accustomed to waste or misdirect their energies. They do not approve of the fuss and feathers of a Court, and they regard its ceremonies with scant respect, for they are inclined to think that they conduce to a servile spirit, which is degrading to humanity. They admit, however, that the scheme of a monarch who reigns but does not rule has its advantages in an empire such as ours, where a connecting link between the mother country and the colonies is desirable. Their objection to the present state of things is mainly based upon financial grounds. Admitting that there is to be a hereditary figure-head, they cannot understand why it should cost so much, why funds which are voted to the monarch should be expended in salaries to noblemen for the performance of ceremonial service, or why the children of the monarch should receive such enormous annuities." He quoted an occasion when the disloyalty of Radicals was supposed to have been amply proved. One of them had voted for an amendment of Sir Charles Dilke when Lord Beaconsfield's Government had proposed an allowance of £25,000 per annum to the Duke of Connaught. "It would have been more to the purpose to show," he said, "why this young gentleman should receive so very ample a pension for condescending to be the son of his parents. Nothing has conduced more to shake that decent respect for the living symbol of the State, which goes by the name of royalty, than the ever-recurring rattle of the money-box. Radicals do not perceive why the children of the monarch should be made public pensioners any more than the children of the

Lord Chancellor. They know that Her Majesty lives in retirement, and that she has a wholesome contempt for the costly ceremonies of a Court; they are aware that as a necessary consequence she has sufficient accumulations to keep her children in comfort. They ask, therefore, why their maintenance should be thrown on the country, and why, if so, this should be on so very costly a scale. They consider, it is true, that Her Majesty has too large a Civil List; yet although they are not deceived by the 'pious fraud' which assumes that the monarch is the owner of the Crown domains and surrenders them on accession to the throne in consideration of a money equivalent for what they produce, they have no burning desire to interfere with existing arrangements during the lifetime of the present incumbent, for they have a sincere respect for the Queen, not only as the constitutional head of the State, but also on account of her excellent personal qualities. They are of opinion, however, that when provision is asked for the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, this will be a fitting opportunity to inaugurate an entire change in the financial relations of the Crown with the country."

The Established Church, education, and the Land Laws are thus drastically treated.

"The income of the Establishment is close upon £5,000,000 per annum. It is the Church of a minority. The greater portion of its revenues were acquired by confiscation. Its division of them amongst its clergy is in defiance of all rule and justice. Cures of souls are matters of public barter. Only the other day the secretary of a race-course company bought the next presentation to a living in order to ensure that the views of the next pastor should be sound on the question of racing. In every country except this the principle has been recognised that so-called ecclesiastical property is national property. In some countries this principle has been pushed to its ultimate consequences, in others it has received a more restricted application. Were we all

members of the Established Church there might be some plea for our devoting a portion of our property to the maintenance of the Church's employés. But the majority of us are not churchmen. Why then should we perpetuate so invidious an application of national funds? The vested rights of living incumbents should be respected, and perhaps it would be only fair that the Church should retain those funds that she has received from the liberality of private donors within the last few years. On an excessive estimate this would amount to £1,000,000 per annum. We require the remaining £4,000,000 per annum for educational purposes, and we mean to have them. . . .

"Whilst all Radicals are agreed that our land system requires a thorough reform, all are perhaps not in accord as to the details of that reform. Some are followers of Mr. George and demand the nationalisation of land; others—and these are the wiser—whilst admitting that it is to be regretted that the paramount proprietorship of the community has been almost entirely ignored, hardly see their way to resume it absolutely, nor do they admit that a person who has acquired a legal title to a freehold can be divested of it without fair compensation. All, however, are agreed that real estate has, in contradistinction to personal estate, certain inherent qualities: it is limited in quantity, and it is a natural instrument; consequently, the State has a right to regulate the conditions of its tenure, and its transmission from one individual to another. We would legislate to break up and destroy all huge domains; to make the occupier to all practical intents the master of the soil which he cultivates, and to secure to him not only fixity of tenure and independence of a landlord's rules and caprices, but the enjoyment of these rights at a fair and reasonable price. A long succession of landlord legislatures have, in the words of Mr. Cobden, 'robbed and bamboozled the people for ages.' All our laws affecting land have been made in order to perpetuate its tenure in the hands of the few from genera-

tion to generation; to render its purchase difficult and expensive; to free its owners from taxes and obligations, in consideration of which their predecessors acquired lordship over it from the State; and to give it an artificial value by securing to its possessors social and political pre-eminence. That there should be few Radicals amongst landlords is less surprising than that any one who is not a landlord should remain outside the Radical pale. To suppose that when Radicals have the power to place our land laws in harmony with the good of the greatest numbers, or to imagine that they will allow the *imperia in imperio* of huge domains to continue, is to suppose that they will take to their heart of hearts their 'robbers and bamboozlers.' Landlords are a mistake socially, politically, and economically. The only true proprietary rights in land are a reasonable interest on sums spent in rendering it more productive, and this only so long as the outlay continues to produce this result; to talk of any other natural proprietary rights is as absurd as it would be to talk of a man having a natural property in the air that we breathe. It is too late now, however, to revert to first principles. We must accept facts and endeavour to make the best of them. This we propose to do, and, as a preliminary step, we demand the renewed imposition of the land-tax at four shillings in the pound upon the full true yearly value at a rack rent; that there should be no more subventions in aid of local taxation from imperial funds largely derived from taxation on food and drink; and that landlords who will not use their land themselves should be made to give it up to those who are ready and anxious to use it."

Towards the end of the article Mr. Labouchere delivers himself somewhat tentatively on the Irish question as follows:

"It was said in the first session of the present Parliament —and no one was more fond of using this argument than Mr. Gladstone—that the limited number of Mr. Parnell's

Parliamentary followers proved that the majority of the constituencies was not with him. Later on, when the error of this estimate of his strength was perceived, it was alleged that his influence was alone secured by terrorism. Slowly it had dawned upon the English mind that the vast majority of Irishmen, rightly or wrongly, cordially and truly sympathise with him. No one now questions that he will sweep Ireland at the next General Election. On the doctrine of probabilities, this will make him the arbiter between parties at St. Stephen's. How is this to be met? The only suggestion put forward as yet has been that both parties should agree that the Irish vote is not to count on a party division. But does any sane human being imagine that such a scheme is practicable? The 'ins' would always assent to it, but the 'outs' would defer their assent until they became the 'ins.' It is indeed becoming every day more and more clear that we must either allow the Irish votes to reckon as other votes, or that we must boldly assert that Ireland shall no longer be represented in Parliament, because we disagree with the representatives that it chooses. There is no middle course; and, if we accept the former, we shall have to allow Ireland hereafter to decide as she best pleases on matters that only locally regard her. Most Radicals would be of opinion that one Parliament for the entire United Kingdom is a better system that one for Great Britain and another for Ireland. But they would go a long way to establish a fair *modus vivendi* between the two islands, and nothing that Mr. Parnell has ever said can be adduced to show that he does not entertain the same desire. Most of his views recommend themselves to Radicals, especially those in regard to land. . . . If the Irish wish for Home Rule why should they not have it? It surely would be easy to conceive a plan in which that island would have a representative assembly that would legislate upon all matters, except those reserved to the Imperial Parliament. These reservations might be precisely the same as those which the American Constitution

reserves to Congress in her relations with State Governments. Mr. Gladstone seemed inclined to accept this solution in 1882, for, in a speech during the session of that year, he asked the Irish members to submit their plan to the House of Commons, whilst the only objection that occurred to him was, that it might be difficult to find an arbiter between the Imperial and the Irish legislature in case of any conflict of jurisdiction—a difficulty which a cursory glance at the American Constitution would have solved. The Irish are sound upon almost every question; they are even more democratically inclined than we are. We want their aid and they want our aid. Irish, English, and Scotch Radicals should coalesce. Mutual concessions may be necessary, but this is always the case in political alliances. That the Irish should not love the English connection is hardly surprising. We are only now beginning to do them justice, and we have accompanied this modicum of justice with a Coercion Act, aimed not only at crime, but at legitimate political agitation. If we remove their grievances, if we make Irishmen the true rulers of Ireland, and if we cease to meddle in matters that concern them and not us, there is no reason to suppose that they would wish to separate from us any more than our colonies. Separation would, indeed, be as disadvantageous to them as to us."

A year or two later he gave clear expression to the same Radical faith in the House of Commons in a speech which he made on his own amendment to the motion that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair: "That in the opinion of this House it is contrary to the true principles of representative Government, and injurious to their efficiency, that any person should be a member of one House of the Legislature by right of birth, and it is therefore desirable to put an end to any such existing rights." "It has been pointed out to him," he said, "that these words might include Her Majesty, which, of course, was not intended . . . they had been engaged in democratising, as far as they could, the Commons

branch of the Legislature; but all their efforts would be abortive, all their efforts at Parliamentary reform would be illusory, if they allowed side by side with that House a Legislative Assembly to exist, which, in its nature, was aristocratic, and which had a right to tamper with and veto the decisions of the nation, which were registered by the House of Commons. . . . Members of the House of Lords were neither elected nor selected for their merits. They sat by the merits of their ancestors, and, if we looked into the merits of some of those ancestors, we should agree that the less said about them the better. The House of Lords consisted of a class most dangerous to the community—the class of rich men, the greater part of whose fortune was in land. It was asserted of them that the House of Lords was recruited from the wisest and best in the country—that the Lords were so wise and good that, in some mysterious way, they were able to transmit their virtues to future generations *in secula seculorum*. The practice in the selection of those gentlemen was not quite in accordance with this theory. They consisted generally of two classes—of those who were apparently successful politicians, and of those who were undoubtedly successful money-grubbers. He would take a few examples, and, as he did not wish to be invidious, he would take them from both sides of the House. They all knew and appreciated Sir R. Assheton Cross, Mr. Sclater Booth, Sir Thomas Brassey, and Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen. What did they think of these gentlemen? As members of this House everybody respected and liked them; but they were looked upon as decent sort of mediocrities of the ordinary quality, which was converted, in course of time, into administrative Ministers. Take another class. Why were brewers selected as peers? Simply because they, of late, had accumulated very large fortunes by the sale of intoxicating liquors, and for no other reason. The names of Guinness, Bass, and Allsopp had been long household words in every public house in the country, but who ever heard of them as

politicians? Yet these gentlemen were considered to be the very best men in the country to be converted into hereditary peers. Another class who made money were the financiers. Lord Rothschild inherited a large fortune, and had increased that fortune, and no doubt spent his money in the most honourable way; but Lord Rothschild did nothing in the House of Commons in any way to distinguish himself. With brewers, when one was made a peer another must be made a peer for advertisement. So with financial houses; when a Rothschild was made a peer, it was necessary to fish up some one of the name of Baring, and one was converted into Lord Revelstoke—a gentleman who, though probably eminent in city circles, was hardly known to any one in that House, and who had never taken part in politics. So much for the composition of the House of Lords. . . . Deducting representative peers from Scotland and Ireland, and deducting members of the Royal family, and deducting bishops and archbishops, he found 470 peers sitting as hereditary peers in the House of Lords. He found that those peers had annually distributed among them £389,163, amounting on an average to £820 each (salaries from appointments under Civil List)—these rich men who would, with one accord, protest against the payment of members of the House of Commons. These were the rich men who were found at public meetings denouncing members from Ireland as a wretched crew, because, being mainly poor men, they received enough to enable them to live from their constituents. The peers were almost as careful of their relations as of themselves. In a valuable publication he saw it put down that, from 1874 to 1886, no fewer than 7000 relatives of peers had had places of emolument under the Government. . . . In the other House there were 120 Privy Councillors, of whom he ventured to say the majority had never heard. Orders had to be found for these gentlemen. Almost every one of them had a decoration. There were three decorations which were absolutely made for peers and for no other body—

the Garter, the Order of St. Patrick, and the Thistle. Walpole had declined a decoration 'because,' he said, 'why bribe myself?' Lord Melbourne said of the Garter that its pleasing feature was that there was 'no nonsense of merit about it.' An impression existed that private Bill legislation was more independent in the House of Lords than in that House. He did not think it was. . . . No men looked better after the class interests of those to whom they belonged than the peers. They were great landowners; 16,000,000 acres belonged to them. Yet our Land Laws were a disgrace to the country and tainted with feudalism. . . . This House of Lords was not collectively any worse than any six hundred men would be. They were *ex necessitate* a Tory House and a House of partisans. The assertion that they subordinated public interests to their private class and party interests was merely tantamount to saying that they were human beings. A House of Artisans would act on similar principles. . . . His amendment went to the root of the evil. He at first thought of including bishops, but he struck them out on the principle of *de minimis non curat lex*. If the hereditary principle were done away with, what the honourable member for Birmingham called 'the incestuous union between the spiritual and the political world' would cease of itself. His amendment would not prejudice the question of whether there ought to be two Chambers or one only. Personally he was in favour of one, but those who voted with him need not necessarily support him on that particular point. Other countries which had two had simply followed our example, and it was a mere result of chance that we happened to have two. If they agreed, the second was useless; if they disagreed, the second was pernicious. If the functions of an Upper Chamber were to be properly fulfilled by those who soared above party and class interest, we must not look for its members in this world, but we must bring down angels from Heaven; but, as that would be difficult, there was one other alternative. The Conservatives at their meetings

always shouted, 'Thank God we have a House of Lords!' Radicals had no intention to remain any longer supinely like toads under the harrow of the House of Lords. They intended to agitate until they could say: 'Thank God we have not an hereditary House of Lords!' "

Mr. Labouchere's amendment on that occasion was defeated by a majority of 61 in a House of 385 members. On November 21, 1884, Labouchere had moved the following resolution: "That in view of the fact that the Conservative party is able and has for many years been able, through its permanent majority in the House of Lords, to alter, defeat, or delay legislation, although that legislation has been recommended by the responsible advisers of the Crown, and approved by the nation through its elected representatives, it is desirable to make such alterations in the relations of the two Houses of Parliament as will effect a remedy to this state of things." Sir Wilfrid Lawson, in seconding the resolution, said that he remembered a few years ago Mr. Labouchere giving notice of a very similar resolution. He asked him if he thought a House could be made for it. Mr. Labouchere had answered, "No, I do not think there will be, for all the Radicals want to be made peers." The member for Northampton prophesied truly, for not forty members could be got to come down.

With untiring patience, however, Mr. Labouchere moved a resolution of the same nature almost every year that he was in Parliament. His perseverance on the subject was only matched by the dogged persistence with which he attacked the ridiculous appurtenances inseparable from the upkeep of a constitutional monarchy. When he was asked by Captain Fred Burnaby once at Homburg why he was always attacking the Royal family, who after all were well meaning people, he replied: "One must find some very solid institution to be able to attack it in comfort. If the love of royalty were not so firmly established in the middle-class English breast, I should not dream of attacking it, for the

institution might topple over, and then what should I do? I should have all the trouble of finding something else to tilt against."

Another expression of his views on the Establishment is found in his speech on Mr. Albert Grey's amendment on the occasion of the Second Reading of the Church Patronage Bill. "From a Radical standpoint," he said, "it was undesirable that there should be an Establishment at all, and there seemed to be no reason why they should be continually tinkering up and remedying this and that abuse in connection with the Church. . . . He agreed with the Secretary of State that this Bill did not go far enough, if it granted compensation in the case of those who now held livings. To sell a cure of souls had always been regarded as a most monstrous iniquity, and why should they give compensation to those who were enjoying what was wrong? They might as well suggest that Simon Magus himself should have had compensation. There was another preposterous clause in the Bill. These advowsons could only be sold to the great landlords and the lords of the manor. If the livings were sold at all, they should be sold to anybody who might be ready to buy them. But why should the great landlords—the race he should be glad to see cleared off the land—why should the great landlords and lords of the manor be allowed to buy livings while other people were not? . . . There was no doubt that matters would be infinitely improved if the parishioners had the right to veto the appointment of clergymen. But the amendment did not go far enough. Why was there only to be a veto? Why not allow the parishioners to elect any clergyman they liked? Why was the bishop to be the only person to be allowed to have a veto? If the majority of the people in a locality were dissenters, he thought they should not be compelled to elect a Church of England clergyman. He was opposed to all this tinkering of the Church of England, which should be disestablished and disendowed. . . . He was quite ready to leave the

Church such amounts as had been given to it within the last twenty years; but he had seen calculations made that, deducting these amounts, a sum of about £5,000,000 per annum ought to come to the public. That sum was the property not of a sect, but of the English people who paid it, and he should like to see a Bill introduced dealing with glebe lands. These glebe lands were, he believed, the worst cultivated in the country, and it would be infinitely better to redistribute them in allotments amongst the deserving labourers of the village than to leave them in the hands of the clergymen. When his honourable friend brought in a Bill dealing with glebe lands, and giving back to them the £5,000,000 of which they were now deprived for the benefit of a sect, then he would give him his most cordial support." And so on.

In the June of 1884 he made one of his common-sense speeches on the subject of the enfranchisement of women. It occurred during the debate on the Representation of the People Bill. "It may be that we should enfranchise women," he said, "but because we have enfranchised men is no reason that we should do so. We may discuss the subject eloquently, we may refer to Joan of Arc and Boadicea, but, in point of fact, from the time of Eve till now there has been a distinct difference between men and women. There are a great many things which I am ready to admit women can do better than men, and there are other things which I think men can do better than women. Each have their separate functions, and the question is whether the function of electoral power is a function which women would adequately discharge. I do not think it is. As yet I understand that no country has really given women the vote; and were it not that honourable gentlemen opposite, who are generally averse to giving the franchise to any large body of men, think, and think justly, that a very large majority of women would vote for Conservatives, I should be surprised at their making this desperate leap in the dark. Some honourable

members on this side of the House have told us that women are better than men. That is the language of poetry. But when we come to facts I am not at all disposed to admit that women are better than men. It is not a question of whether women are angels or not, but whether they will make good electors . . . the honourable member has told us that he was convinced of this because Queen Anne was a great queen; and he told us also that Elizabeth was a great queen. But Anne was not a great queen, and Elizabeth had the intellect of a man with the weaknesses of a woman. The honourable member also spoke of Queen Christina of Sweden, but every one knows that she was one of the most execrable queens that ever lived, for, after being deposed by her subjects, she went to Paris and murdered her secretary. We learn that, by the operation of nature, more women are born into the world than men, that women live longer than men, and that a considerable number of men leave the kingdom as soldiers and sailors, while women remain at home. In consequence of this there are, at any given moment, a greater number of women than men in the country. I am told that in every county, with the exception of Hampshire, more women would be put on the register than men if we had woman suffrage. And what would be the consequence? They would look to the interests of women; they would band themselves together, and we should have them, of course, asking to be admitted to this House; and then, if they were admitted, instead of being on an equality with them, we should put ourselves under petticoat government; we should have women opposite, women on these benches, and a woman perhaps in the chair. They would, of course, like women everywhere, have their own way. The honourable member had hesitated as to whether he would give the vote to married women as well as to unmarried women, and, by his mode of dealing with the question, it would seem that he gave to vice what he denied to virtue. As long as a woman remains a spinster, it appears that she is to have the vote, but that, so soon as

she marries, she is to cease to be an elector; she is to lose her rights if she enters into the holy and honourable state of matrimony, and, if her husband dies, she is again to get the vote. When Napoleon was asked by Mme. de Stael who was the best woman in the State, he said: 'Madame, the woman who has the most children.' "

It will be seen from the above extract that his opinion of the female sex was early Victorian, and so it remained to the end of his life. He was always a bitter opponent of woman suffrage; and when, in 1896, a petition for the Suffrage signed by 257,000 women from all parts of the United Kingdom was exhibited, "by kind permission of the Home Secretary," in Westminster Hall on a series of tables for the inspection of members, he immediately called the attention of the Speaker that afternoon in the House to the "unseemly display," and insisted upon its removal.

He was indefatigable in his efforts to introduce economical Radical finance into every detail of government, always assuring his hearers that he was fighting for the principle of economy, and not merely against the mere absurdity of the existence of certain traditional offices and extravagances. In 1885 we find him requesting the Attorney-General to do his best to suppress the offices of Trainbearer, Pursebearer, and Clerk of the Petty Bag. He protested ably against the large sums spent upon the upkeep of the royal yacht, and upon the "objectionable practice" of asking the Commons to vote a sum of money for special packets for conveyance of distinguished persons to and from England. He protested against the nation being asked to pay the expenses incurred in the ceremony of making the present King (then Prince George of Wales) a Knight of the Garter. He was, in short, unceasingly vigilant wherever the spending of public money was concerned, and his remarks were usually practical and to the point. A quotation from a letter he wrote to the *Times* in the same year on the Graduated Income Tax will be of interest, as peculiarly illustrative of his clear and simple

view of the rights of the poor man versus those of the rich man. "The income tax," he wrote, "when first put on by Mr. Pitt, was a graduated tax. No one then regarded this as a spoliation or confiscation. That a rich man should pay a higher percentage of taxation than a poor man is based upon what Mr. Stuart Mill terms 'equality of sacrifice.' It will, I presume, he admitted by all that the first call upon a man's income is that portion of it which is necessary for him and his family to eat, to be clothed, and to secure some sort of home. If a man earns only £50 per annum, and has an average family of two children, let me ask what remains after this call has been met? Nothing. And if he has to pay taxes, he and his family are obliged to go without a sufficiency of clothing, or without a fitting home. Now look at the case of a man with £50,000 per annum, and with a family of the same size. He pays in taxation about 4½% on his income—let us say 5%. This absorbs £2500. He may secure to himself and them not only all necessaries, but all comforts, for £500 per annum. Surely the sacrifice on his part to the exigencies of the State of £7000 per annum would not be so great a one as would be that of £2, 10s. per annum by the man with an income of £50 per annum. As a matter of fact, however, the rich man pays at present a maximum of 5%, and the poor man about twice that percentage. . . ."

He made a speech in the Radical Club at North Camberwell on November 14, 1885, in which he once more resumed his creed, and with it I must end this chapter, so as to proceed with the history of the practice to which he put his theories. "In the House of Commons," he said, "Radicals had hitherto been in a very small minority, and were not appreciated, and it was therefore gratifying to him as a strong Radical to find what they did in the House of Commons was appreciated by those who made the House of Commons. For his own part he was bound to say he could not form any clear idea of what 'Conservative' meant now. In the past, Con-

servatives were a party banded together to support the landed interest, but Lord Randolph Churchill told them that this was to be all forgotten, and that the Conservatives were to become Tory Democrats. These two words were utterly antagonistic in themselves, and he could not understand how men could be fish and fowl at the same time. The only principle which was guiding the Tories was to get into office and remain there. No reasonable man could become a Conservative. As for the Whigs they were more dangerous than the Tories. There were about thirty of them in the House of Commons. They rarely spoke, but their influence —a backstair influence—was such that Ministers yielded to them, and it was to them that the action in Egypt was due, and they were the cause of the Crimes Bill in Ireland—both of which had been steadfastly opposed by the Radicals in Parliament. It was easier to deal with an open enemy than with a traitor in the camp. Happily the Whigs were expiring, and he did not think any one would care to adopt their creed. Coming to the Radical creed he said it was that England should become a democracy, by which was meant the rule of the people by the people and for the people. He was surprised statesmen could not see that the people would use the power given them for their own advantage. They would insist on a Government not mixed, as now, with an aristocratic element in it. They would deal with the entire Legislature, the Crown, the Lords, and the Commons; and, if they were of his mind, they would go in for a much more sweeping franchise. The vote was a right and not a privilege, and every man, not a criminal, ought to possess it, or he was defrauded of his right. He went in for residential manhood suffrage, for free education, for which he would apply the Church revenues and the misused charities. He was opposed to all indirect taxation, and advocated what had been described as equality of sacrifice in general and local taxation—that was, he would have a graduated income tax, and, in no case, tax the necessaries of life. In conclu-

sion he said he hoped Mr. Chamberlain would succeed Mr. Gladstone as Prime Minister, and as for the Whigs they were welcome to go over to the Tories. He would not refuse to accept Lord Hartington, if he elected to fight under the Radical party, but he would refuse to sink his own personal opinions for any one."[1]

[1] *Times*, October 15, 1885.

CHAPTER XI

IN OPPOSITION

(JUNE, 1885—DECEMBER, 1885)

MR LABOUCHERE was not only a zealous friend and advocate of the Irish members in Parliament, but a variety of circumstances conspired with his own aptitudes to constitute him an unofficial ambassador between conflicting parties in the House, and, in particular, between the Liberal Cabinet and the Nationalist leader. "His real influence," wrote Sir Henry Lucy recently, "was exercised beyond the range of the Speaker's eye. Nothing pleased him more than being engaged in the lobby, the smoking-room,[1] or a remote corner of the corridors, working out some little plot. By conviction a thorough Radical, such was the catholicity of his nature that he was on terms of personal intimacy with leaders of every section of party, not excepting those who sat on the Treasury Bench. He was one of the few men—perhaps the only man—whom Parnell treated with an approach to confidence. He watched the growth of the Fourth Party with something like paternal interest. Lord Randolph Churchill and he were inseparable. In these various episodes and connections he delighted to play the part of the friendly broker."[2] In this way, far more effectively than by formal speech or resolution, though here too

[1] The present Strangers' Dining-room.

[2] Sir Henry Lucy, *Sixty Years in the Wilderness*, vol. ii.

he was untiring in the fight, he was able to use what is called "the personal factor in politics." And in his case the personal factor was no light weight. His extreme opinions, in which he had never wavered since the days when, as a young man, he had scornfully declined the succession to his uncle's peerage, secured him the confidence both of the Irish and of the left wing of the Liberals, while, by birth, education, and habit of life, he was the welcome intimate of men who sat on the other side of the House. Eton, Trinity, and the diplomatic service were an unusual training for an ultra-Radical and gave an attractive flavour of sacrilege to his views. No one appreciated this circumstance more than he did himself, and certainly no one could have put it out to better interest.

On June 8, 1885, a coalition of Tories and Irish defeated the Government by a majority of twelve. The occasion was an amendment moved by Sir Michael Hicks Beach during the second reading of the Budget Bill, condemning the increase of beer and spirit duties proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The combination between the Opposition and the Irish was due to information having been given by one of the Opposition leaders to the Irish party to the effect that the Tories, if returned to power, would not renew the Coercion Act, which would automatically expire in the following August.[1] Mr. Gladstone resigned the next day, and, after some delay, Lord Salisbury accepted office and formed his first administration. The new Viceroy, Lord Carnarvon, following the precedents of Lord Mulgrave in 1837 and Lord Clarendon in 1850, himself made the declaration of the Irish policy of the new Government. That policy was a complete renunciation of coercion. Ireland was to be governed by the ordinary law of the land. "My Lords, I do not believe that with honesty and single-mindedness of purpose on one hand, and with the willingness of the Irish people on the other, it is hopeless to look for some satisfac-

[1] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii.

tory solution of this terrible question. My Lords, these I believe to be the views and opinions of my colleagues." The "honesty and single-mindedness" of this piece of tactics were severely criticised by Mr. Chamberlain. "A strategic movement of that kind executed in opposition to the notorious convictions of the men who effected it, carried out for party purposes and party purposes alone, is the most flagrant instance of political dishonesty this country has ever known."

The Irish party were much impressed by the advances of the Conservatives, and when Lord Carnarvon arranged to meet Parnell in conversation on Irish affairs, in the course of which they discussed whether "some plan of constituting a Parliament in Dublin, short of the repeal of the Union, might not be devised and prove acceptable to Ireland,"[1] Parnell may be excused for having thought that salvation was to come from the Tories. Mr. Gladstone had not yet pronounced himself. The Liberal Government had imprisoned the Irish leader; its record in Ireland, with the exception of the Arrears Bill, was summed up in the word coercion. Liberal politicians were naturally upset at the new turn of events. Mr. Healy had written on May 25 to Mr. Labouchere saying that "apart from coercion, it was the policy of the Irish party to equalise all Liberals and Tories as much as possible *pour nous faire valoir*, so that the matter will have to be looked at by us apart from the renewal of coercion, though of course, I imagine, if we thought we could trust the Liberals to avoid obnoxious legislation and to stick to reform, we should support them strongly. But how can we have any guarantee of the kind?" Mr. Healy continues further on in the letter: "I think a little time in the cool of Opposition would do your party a world of good. . . . If we supported your party next time, the Lords would throw out or render worthless any Bill the Commons passed, and time has proved that the Whigs won't face the Lords. If that institution were abolished we should be great fools not

[1] Barry O'Brien, *Life of Parnell.*

to be friendlier with the Liberals, but they are almost powerless to help us, even if they were sincere, so long as the Lords are all-powerful." In a letter to Mr. Labouchere, dated July 18, Mr. Chamberlain made the following significant statement as to his feeling in the matter:

The present attitude of the Irish leaders is not at all encouraging to Radicals. They take no account whatever of our difficulties or of the extent to which we have, in the past, supported Irish claims, and now that a Tory Government is in office they are ready to accept from them with joy and gratitude the merest crumbs of consolation, while they reject with scorn and contumely the offers of further legislation which we have made. I think, under these circumstances, we must stand aside for the present. The Irish Members "must stew in their juice" with the Tories until they find out their mistake. Whether the support of the Radicals will still be forthcoming is a question. My information from the country satisfies me that further concessions to Irish opinion are not at all popular even with our Radical constituents, and, under all the circumstances, I am not unwilling to keep silence for a time and await the course of events.

The Parnellites, as I understand, cannot count upon two things:

First, on holding the balance after the next General Election. I am convinced that they are mistaken, and we shall have a majority over them and the Tories combined.

Secondly, they believe in the readiness of the Tories, under the stress of party exigency, to make concessions to them in the shape of Home Rule and otherwise, which even the Radicals are not prepared to agree to. In this, also, I am convinced they are mistaken. To whatever lengths Randolph Churchill may be willing to go, his party will not follow him so far, and, sooner or later, the Parnellites will find that they have been sold. I believe the experience will be a healthy one for them and for us.

The situation appealed strongly to Mr. Labouchere, and he took up the part of the "friendly broker" with zest.

On July 22, he saw Mr. Healy and wrote the following account of his interview to Mr. Chamberlain:

Healy favoured me to his views during three hours to-day. I told him that we were sure to win without the Irish, but that if he and his friends wished for any sort of Home Rule, he must understand that his only chance was to ally himself with the Radicals and to support you. I said that I had tried to impress this upon Parnell, but that he talked rubbish about Grattan's Parliament, and seemed to me to be thoroughly impractical. Healy said that Parnell in his heart cared little for the Irish, particularly since a mob ill-treated him in 1880. He regretted to be obliged to admit that personal feeling actuated his leader's policy at times, but Parnell felt his dignity offended by his arrest and his present feeling was revenge on Gladstone and Forster.

I suggested a rebellion. But he said that this was impossible because the present policy of all Irishmen was hanging together, for they attributed all their troubles to divided councils. He said that Parnell is very astute. He generally finds out which way the feeling is amongst his followers before he suggests anything, but, in one or two cases, he has put his foot down, when he obtained his way.

I asked him about Davitt. He laughed at the idea of his being of any use to the Liberals. He is a very difficult man, he said, and a trouble to Parnell, who would like him to go against us openly, for this would smash him; he cares neither for Tories nor Radicals. If Parnell joined the latter he would coquette with the former and vice versa.

As regards the present situation he said that there never was anything which could be called a treaty with the Conservatives, but that there was an understanding that, if they helped the Tories to turn out the late Government, and generally supported them during the remainder of the Session, there was to be no coercion. "Churchill talks to us vaguely about Home Rule, but we do not pay much attention to this. We are now paying our debt that we have incurred." According to present arrangements, the Party is to put out a manifesto calling upon all Irish in England to vote solid for the Conservative candidates. This policy was adopted, he continued, in order to hold the balance.

I went into figures to show him that we should win without the Irish, and said that the balance policy would only end in their tying themselves to a corpse.

He admitted that this was possible, and said that personally his sympathies were with the Radicals, but that it was impossible to trust the Liberal party, and to hope that the Liberal party could do anything even if they wished to, owing to the House of Lords. "No alliance," I said, "is worth anything which is not based upon mutual interest. We shall win at the election, but we shall have to count with the Whigs. The English electors will be indignant at your conduct, and we shall naturally take our revenge on you for your supporting the Tories. Now, if you would join us, we should be strong enough to hold our own against Whigs and Tories. We want your votes in the House of Commons; you will find that you will do nothing without ours. What do you say to Chamberlain's scheme of Home Rule in the *Fortnightly?* He said: " . . . there are . . . some things that I object to in it, but Chamberlain could not carry it. Even if he got it through the House of Commons, the Lords would throw it out."[1]

Well, we went on discussing. At last he said: "Can we have any assurance that Chamberlain's scheme would be one on which a Radical or Liberal Ministry would stand or fall? Will Gladstone declare for it?" "What would you do if you could be certain of a big scheme forming part of the Liberal platform?" I asked. "Our party really is guided by about six men. What we decide," he said, "the others accept. I would propose that we do not compromise ourselves with the Tories, that we should issue no manifesto, leaving Irish electors to vote as they like. When the plan is put forth in the next Parliament, we should have to say that it does not go far enough, etc., but it might merely be a dummy opposition. Whether I could carry this I don't know, but I think that I could." . . . Finally he said that he would be back at the commencement of August, and that, if any arrangement could be made, he would do his best to further it.

There are two points in your scheme that he wants modified, and these I will explain to you when I see you at the House, and

[1] Mr. Healy wrote an attack on Mr. Chamberlain's article, as soon as it appeared, in *United Ireland*, under the title of "Queen's Bench Home Rule."

you have a moment's spare time. He told me to tell you that those who wished that you should be ill received in Ireland would not have their way, and that you may count on a perfectly friendly reception.

This letter is long, but I thought that you would like to know Healy's ideas, as he is by far the most honest and ablest of the Irishmen. . . . It is all very well expecting to win the elections, but the Irish vote is an important factor, and if only we could square the eighty Irish in the House, and turn them into your supporters, Whigs and Tories would be dished. Certainly there is no love lost between the Allies. W. O'Brien, Healy told me, declines to speak to any of them, regarding them as intriguers with whom they are allied because of the Coercion Acts.

Mr. Healy wrote again to Mr. Labouchere on August 2, and his letter concluded with the following decisive words: "Of course, however, I should be bound by the majority, and would steadfastly carry out Parnell's policy, whatever it is declared by the Party to be."

On August 11, Parliament was prorogued and politicians soon began the campaign in the constituencies with a view to the General Election, which was to take place in November. Lord Salisbury had made the first bid for the Irish vote in a speech at the Mansion House on July 29, in which he defended Carnarvon's policy as the logical outcome of the Franchise Act of 1884. On August 24, Parnell made a very important speech at Dublin, in which he said that the Irish platform would consist of one plank only—legislative independence. The English press was roused to vehement denunciation. The *Times* said that an Irish Parliament was "impossible." The *Standard* besought Whigs and Tories "to present a firm uncompromising front to the rebel chief." The *Daily Telegraph* hoped that the House of Commons would not be seduced or terrified into surrender. The *Manchester Guardian* declared that Englishmen would "condemn or punish any party or any public man who attempted to walk in the path traced by Mr. Parnell."

The *Leeds Mercury* did not think the question of an Irish Parliament worth discussing; while the *Daily News* felt that Great Britain could only be saved from the tyranny of Mr. Parnell by a "strong administration composed of advanced Liberals."[1] The right wing of the Liberals, represented by Lord Hartington, and the left by Mr. Chamberlain, both protested. Hartington, speaking on August 2, referred to Parnell's manifesto as "so fatal and mischievous a proposal." Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at Warrington in the early days of September, said very definitely: "Speaking for myself, I say that if these and these alone are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained, I will not enter into competition for it." The veteran leader, for the moment, was silent, having retired for repose and meditation to Norway. But though he said nothing himself, he stimulated others to speak. Mr. Barry O'Brien was approached in August by a well-known English publicist, who begged him to write some articles on the Irish question of a "historical and dispassionate nature." The publicist made this request "at the suggestion of a great man—in fact a very great man." The very great man was Mr. Gladstone. The first article was published in November under the title of "Irish Wrongs and English Remedies." On September 18 Mr. Gladstone issued the famous Hawarden Manifesto admitting the necessity for Home Rule.

Mr. Labouchere was busy all the autumn trying to get at the various shades of opinion prevalent among the Irish members. Michael Davitt was often a thorn in Parnell's side, and the following letter he wrote to Mr. Labouchere on October 9 is very interesting as indicating clearly the way in which the two patriots often came into collision:

There is a general impression among the rank and file of Irish Nationalists that the G. O. M. will come nearest to Parnell's demand. There is no English statesman more admired by the

[1] Barry O'Brien, *Life of Parnell.*

mass of the people, notwithstanding what *United Ireland* and platform speakers may say to the contrary. But the priests and bishops would rather have the Tory party attempt the solution of the Home Rule problem, owing to the fact of the Conservatives being in favour of Denominational Education. Men like Healy, strange to say, are also pro-Tory in this respect, as they fear that if Chamberlain and his party become dominant, the Radical or democratic element in the Irish Nationalist movement will be able to settle the Land question on more advanced lines than those of the Parliamentary party. In fact we have Tory Nationalists and democratic Nationalists in our ranks, and the latter would like to see men like Chamberlain, Morley, and yourself in a position to arrange the Anglo-Irish difficulty. Parnell's attitude on Protection is absurd. If we had a National Assembly in Dublin to-morrow, he could not carry a measure in favour of Protection. Three-fourths of our people live by agriculture, and these want to export their surplus produce, and would, beyond doubt, be in favour of Free Trade. Since Parnell's Arklow speech I have more than once attacked Protection, and, in his recent Wicklow pronouncement, he considerably modified his views on the question. How singular that the volunteers in Grattan's time demanded Free Trade from England, and that England squelched our manufactures by—Protection!

I wish to Heaven Chamberlain had not made that Warrington "30 to 4" speech of his. He has played into the hands of the Tory Nationalists.

Have you read my suggestions about a possible *modus vivendi* between England and Ireland in the concluding chapter of my book? Parnell took his One Chamber idea from it. There is no room for a Custom House in my simple plan, and the Irish people would jump at such a scheme of self-government, while every soldier now in Ireland might be removed without any danger to the integrity of the Empire, if such a plan of settlement were adopted. . . .

No more vivid light can be thrown on Mr. Labouchere's political activities at this period than is derived from his letters. He was in communication with all parties. The

following selection from his correspondence illustrates the delicacy and importance of the negotiations with which he was concerned. The most interesting of these letters are undoubtedly those exchanged between himself and Mr. Chamberlain. In them we see clearly enough what was the main interest of Mr. Labouchere's life at this time. I have already pointed out how completely he subordinated all other political questions to his wide-reaching plans for the Radicalisation first of the Liberal party and secondly of the country. Irish or Egyptian or South African politics were but pawns in his game. In this correspondence we see how that dominant interest came to be identified in his mind with Mr. Chamberlain himself. His frank admiration of and political devotion to Mr. Chamberlain may be read between the lines of all his letters. A note that may almost be called pathetic creeps into the later letters, when he has realised at last that his glorious schemes are going to be frustrated by the man on whom he had so completely relied for their success. The dramatic quality of some of the letters is intense. The angel wrestles with Jacob and knows it is in vain.

Mr. T. M. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

DUBLIN, Oct. 15, 1885.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—A number of us had a long chat with Parnell on Saturday, and he seems quite confident that whether Liberals or Tories get in, Home Rule will be granted. I quite agree that, if the Tories get in with our votes and are kept in by our help, they will come to terms, but I am not at all so sure that if the Liberals get in they would have the courage (even if they had the will—did we oppose them) to face the question.

It is no use discussing our attitude from any other than the expediency standpoint. We have to make the best fight we can for a small country, and clearly, if we could put the Tories in and hold them dependent on us, that is our game. With the House of Lords behind them and our help, they could play ducks

and drakes with the Union, were they so minded. I confess, however, I am so ignorant of the English campaign that I don't find myself able to speculate on the outcome of the ballot box, but I can hardly believe that there is much prospect of the Liberals being beaten. What you have not touched upon in any letter to me is the point which always ghosts me—if the Liberals bring in a bold scheme how will they overcome the House of Lords? You must remember that the Tories would then raise the anti-Irish cry and the Lords would be in no unpopular position in rejecting a scheme which they would allege meant dismemberment. Of course, if the Liberals then promised to dissolve, it is hard to believe that with our support they would not win, but it must be remembered that Liberals are not united in our favour, and though Mr. Gladstone could keep them together, yet men like Hartington and Harcourt would secretly sympathise with the Tories, and would certainly not show enthusiasm in rallying the constituencies on an Irish cry. I don't believe a bit in principle being of any account with English parties. Look at the way Chamberlain spoke of Ireland when he was baulked of coming over. Read—to take a minor creature—Osborne Morgan's speeches. Mr. Gladstone is the only one who has shown no bitterness and has kept the controversy in what the Germans call the *heitern regionen wo die reinen formen wohnen*. Of course I admit that we have given great cause for bitterness, but I maintain that we could not have fought successfully in any other style, whereas the English, with their bayonets to rely on, need not grudge us Billingsgate—though certainly we have not been allowed the exclusive use of this feeble weapon.

I was glad to read Childers' speech, which produced an excellent impression here by its moderation and practicalness. With regard to a plan, Parnell asked Sexton and myself to try and draw up something, but we were so busy—that without a good library, which we have not here, easily available, the task is appalling. Parnell's idea is to abolish the Lord Lieutenancy, strike a financial balance between the two countries, giving, as our Imperial quota, an average on ten years' returns of Irish contributions with the cost of ruling Ireland deducted. This would get rid of the Irish Parliament voting or refusing supplies, as the sum would be a fixed one, and if we did not pay it we could

very easily be compelled. He would be for retaining the Irish members at Westminster, and I suppose there would not be much trouble in the arrangement being made in that case, that they should be summoned by the Speaker to debate affairs which he declared Imperial or Irish, and in the English Legislature taking them at a particular period of the Session for the sake of convenience. I think we should have full power over everything here except the Army and the Navy, as I cannot see what other interest England has here. If we pay her a due taxation, what possible care of hers is it how else we order our affairs? As for the minority, the Protestants would soon realise they were safe with the Catholics (and they would be the pets of our people). Let there be, by all means, every guarantee given for their protection however. If the Tories come in they would give us Protection, I am sure, but would stipulate for terms for the landlords.—Faithfully yours,

T. M. Healy.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Oct. 18, 1885.

My dear Chamberlain,—Just before the end of the Session Herbert Gladstone came to me, and asked me to endeavour to arrange some sort of *modus vivendi* with the Irish. His father, he said, required time, if any joint action was to be taken in the next Parliament, to gain over the Whigs, and he was determined not to lead unless he had a united party behind him. I told Herbert Gladstone that I was convinced that Parnell, for various reasons, did not want an arrangement and that he would prefer to remain an irreconcilable, but that it might be possible to influence him through Healy and others. So I sent to Healy, who came over to England. Healy explained that personally he was strongly in favour of an arrangement, but that any one going against Parnell would be nowhere just now, because the Irish had got it into their heads that union was strength. But he promised to do all that he could. Then I went abroad. On my return Herbert wrote to ask what had been done. Healy replied that a Committee consisting of Sexton, T. P. O'Connor, etc., had been appointed to look into federations generally, and

to report thereon, but that Parnell hardly spoke to his followers upon political matters, beyond such as concerned the Irish elections, and he went into various details as to what he thought would prove satisfactory. This letter I sent to Hawarden, and got back a letter stating the views of the G. O. M., the phrase being always "I" or "I think my father" as had been agreed. The G. O. M. says that he is disposed to grant the fullest Home Rule etc., but that he does not think it is desirable to formulate a scheme before the elections, and he again presses for the Irish minimum. I have sent this to Healy. Evidently the game of the G. O. M. is to endeavour to unite the Party on Irish Legislation, and to make that his *cheval de bataille*; but he says that he will do nothing unless he can get some assurance that the Irish will in the main back him up. I don't think that they will, but, with such strange creatures, there is no knowing.

I spent yesterday morning with our friend Randolph. He says that the Conservatives count upon 280 returns in their favour, and that if they get anything like this they will not resign, and they hope to remain in office for two or three years, owing to the coalition between the Whigs, the Irish, and the Radicals. He says that Hartington, who up to now has been very guarded in his observations, now in private denounces you, and vows that he will not stand it. In his (Randolph's) opinion, he will withdraw from politics. If he does not, Randolph anticipates that the outcome will be an Aberdeen Ministry. Randolph looks very ill, though he says that he is pretty well. He is taking digitalis for his heart, and says that he is certain that the late hours in the House of Commons will knock him up. . . .

What is the real feeling in the country I do not know, but I have in the last fortnight attended some of the meetings of the nonentities who are contesting the Metropolitan Constituencies, and here you are first and the rest nowhere. The Whigs seem to have disappeared entirely. My impression is that they have all gone over to the Conservatives, and that the Whig leaders are—if the country is to be judged by the metropolis—entirely without followers. When you allude to Goschen there are groans, when you allude to Hartington there is silence; and you have to get up a cheer for the G. O. M. by dwelling upon his noble heart and that sort of trash. I think, however, that

the Conservatives will gain more seats in London than we anticipate.

By the way, I do not think that the alliance of Randolph with the Irish is going on very smoothly. He complained to me that it was impossible to trust Parnell, and that the Maamtrasna business had been sprung as a surprise. Before the Conservatives came in, Parnell told me that he would support the Conservatives on no Coercion Bill, a scheme for buying out the landlords, and money expended in further works. No sooner were they in than he told me that the feeling in Ireland was so strong for Home Rule that it must be pushed forward. My own experience of Parnell is that he never makes a bargain without intending to get out of it, and that he has either a natural love of treachery, or considers that promises are not binding when made to a Saxon. . . .

Would it not be possible to have one grand Bill for local government in both islands, and settling the difference between local and Imperial Sessions. It might be made so as to oblige English Conservatives to oppose it in their own interests, and sufficiently strong to make it difficult for the Irish to reject it on the second reading?—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

HIGHBURY, BIRMINGHAM, Oct. 20, 1885.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—Thanks for your most interesting letter, which confirms my suspicions as to the intentions of our great chief. I was led to them in the first instance by the speeches of H. G. at Leeds—he is generally inspired, I think. Mr. G. himself was cautious with me at Hawarden, though he did not conceal that his present interest was in the Irish question, and he seemed to think that a policy for dealing with it might be found which would unite us all and which would necessarily throw into the background those minor points of difference about the schools and small holdings which threaten to drive the Whigs into the arms of the Tories or into retirement. But I agree with you that the *modus vivendi* cannot be found. First, because all Liberals are getting weary of making concessions to Parnell,

and will not stand much more of it, and secondly, because Parnell cannot be depended on to keep any bargain. I believe, therefore, that Mr. G.'s plans will come to naught.

I hope Randolph Churchill is all out in his calculations. I do not give the Tories more than 200. Of course the future depends on the result of the Elections, but my impression is that Hartington will yield, grumbling as usual, but still yielding.

The effect of the campaign I have just completed has surprised me. I really had no idea at first of giving more than a "friendly lead" to candidates in the new constituencies. The idiotic opposition of the Whigs and the abuse of the Tories has turned my gentle hint into a great national policy—and now it must be forced on at all hazards. The majority of new County candidates are pledged to it—ditto Scotch members, ditto London. In Lancashire it is not so strong, as there are signs of rebellion in the constituencies against the half-hearted orders of the local Caucus.

I fear we cannot run English and Irish Local Government in one Bill—the present conditions are so absolutely dissimilar—but we will consider this again, if we have the opportunity. I am glad to say there is a good chance that Goschen will be defeated at Edinburgh. The working men are dead against him.

On the whole I am satisfied with the outlook. The first difficulty is to find fellow-workers: the rank and file are all right, but there is an awful lack of Generals, and even of non-commissioned officers.—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Oct. 20, 1885.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I send you enclosed to look at.[1] I have forwarded copy to Healy. Evidently the G.O.M. is getting a little anxious about the Election, and is now trying to persuade the Parnellites that they must try and get pledges from the Conservatives, because he knows that they cannot. As he says, the Land question is the difficulty, because he is not prepared to admit that its regulation in Ireland is involved in

[1] The enclosure was letter from Mr. Herbert Gladstone dated October 18.

Local Government, and that it in no way affects the integrity of the Empire, whether land in Kilkenny belongs to this man or that. I have pointed out to Healy that the difficulty might perhaps be turned by supporting your plan of compulsory purchase by local authorities in both islands, and I have explained to him the meaning of a fair price—viz. such an amount as would give the landlord the same net income in consols or Government bonds, as he gets now from his land, or ought to get, and I have urged upon him that if such a Bill were passed, and if there were Home Rule in Ireland, the Irish might surely make things so uncomfortable to the landlords that they would be glad to clear out for very little.

Would it not be a good plan to have one grand Bill, coupling together local self-government here, and Home Rule in Ireland? We should in that way get the Irish votes for England, and if the portions of the Bill really do give substantial Home Rule in Ireland, I greatly doubt whether the Irish would venture to vote against the second reading. They might develop their views and swagger in Committee. If this Bill were coupled with another on your lines respecting land, the two questions could be solved, or your purchase claims might form part of the Bill. At the bottom of the difficulty is the G. O. M. He still hankers first after the Whigs, and is not sound on the land question . . ., and is bent upon that difficult task of making oil and water combine. Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

Highbury, Birmingham, Oct. 23, 1885.

My dear Labouchere,—My last letter has partly anticipated yours of 21st. I return H. G.'s communication. He has apparently his father's capacity for mystification, for I cannot possibly make out what he is really driving at.

Does he imagine that the Tories can be committed beforehand to support a small Liberal majority in some scheme of advanced Local Govt.?

He must be an *ingenuus puer*. For my part I believe in leaving the Irishmen to "stew in their own juice." My proposal is the

maximum that English Radicals will stand and a great deal more than the Whigs will accept. It had practically been agreed to by Parnell, and yet he threw it over at the last moment. It is impossible to depend on him and it is much better policy now to play the waiting game. If Randolph is right we shall be the better for not being pledged.

I am sure, however, that he is wrong, but even then we shall be much stronger in negotiation when we have a majority at our backs.

If the G. O. M. were ill-advised enough to propose a separate Parliament, he will find very little support from any section of the party.—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Nov. 12, 1885.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—This is the last communication from Healy, which he wants sent to the G. O. M. So I send it through the usual channel. After saying that he will do his best for Lefevre, he says:

> "It is very difficult for us to adopt a piecemeal policy, although it certainly is the intention to issue instructions that in regard to half a dozen Liberals, they shall be supported at all hazards, but so far as I can gather the working of Parnell's mind up to the present, it is not certain that he will go against the Liberals bald-headed, if at all. T. P. O'Connor is strong for supporting the Tories. If we could have an understanding with the leaders, it would settle this and every other question. It seems to me curious that we are now to be asked to define our demands, on a question on which English Statesmen do not need much instruction, seeing that in 1881, when the agrarian question was certainly complicated, nobody dreamed of asking our opinion, but on the contrary the beauty of the measure was that it was supposed to be disapproved by the Nationalists. I cannot, therefore, help feeling that this demand for a plan from us is simply a desire for our discomfort, and the profit of the English. If there is really earnestness in the Liberal

Party next Session (should they be in a majority) to settle the Irish question, I do not think they will find us unreasonable. God knows it is time we were at peace, but if they insist on forcing on us a Bill, which we denounce, and which we shall wreck in the working, the contest between the two countries will grow more aggravated than ever. Spencer and Forster were hit a thousand times more than Trevelyan, and yet they never went pushing about, spitting gall as he has done. The G. O. M. is the father of them all, and I do urge him to develop a little the lines of his first speech which I have just read."

And then he goes into a puff of the G. O. M.'s Article against Darwin, which, it seems, delights the Roman Catholics.

Could you not give them a few smooth words in a speech, particularly in regard to land. They have taken it into their silly heads that you are now their enemy, and as they have eighty votes it is just as well to clear this illusion away.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Nov. 16, 1885.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—This is the proposal to the Irish, which I forward.[1] It is in reply to Healy's last communication. You will see that the question of the land etc., being under the control of the Irish Chamber, is shirked.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

HIGHBURY, BIRMINGHAM, Nov. 22, 1885.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—You see, Parnell has gone against the Liberals. I felt certain he would. He has been playing with those around him and has intentionally deceived some of his own friends. I really think he will force us all, Radicals and

[1] The proposal was contained in a letter from Mr. Herbert Gladstone to Mr. Labouchere, which Mr. Labouchere quoted in full for Mr. Chamberlain's information. It enumerated six conditions as the basis of a settlement of the Irish Government question.

Liberals, to reject all arrangements with him. If we had a good Speaker with dictatorial powers he could stop Irish obstruction and P.'s power in Ireland would be shaken as soon as the people saw he was impotent in Parliament.

We are having a much harder fight than we expected. I think we shall win all our seats here, but it is a hard pull. The Tories are very confident and are regaining courage in the counties. My hope is that the labourers will lie courageously—promise to the Tories and vote for us. . . . —Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Nov. 25, 1885.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—That undaunted sportsman the G. O. M. is still hankering after the Irish and his general scheme of pacification. I get a letter from Rosebery every day, asking for this and that information. I have written to say that *if* the Liberals get a majority, it may be possible to negotiate, but that at present it is a mere waste of time to try anything.

We have been losing for a very clear reason. You put forward a good Radical programme. This would have taken. But no sooner had you put it forward than Hartington and others denounced it. Then the G. O. M. proposed that any question should be shunted to the dim and distant future, and that all should unite to bring him back to power, with a Coalition Ministry—in fact the old game which had already resulted in shilly shally. I think the inhabitants of towns have shown their wisdom in preferring even the Conservatives to this. I want to find the people on our side, who are against disestablishment. Some Peers and leaders are, but the masses go for it. They are simply sulky at being told that everything must knock under to Peers and Whigs. This is how I read the elections. Our only hope now is in the "cow," and here too I am afraid that the Whigs will have thrown cold water on all enthusiasm. I am not myself particularly sorry at what is occurring. A year or two of opposition will be far better—from the Radical standpoint—than a Cabinet with a Whig majority in it. With all the elements of disintegration, we surely shall

be able to render Conservative legislation impossible, and to force on a dissolution very soon, when your Caucus must come out with a clear and definite programme. Milk may be good for babes, but Whig milk will not do for electors. The Whigs have dished themselves, thank God. Even Gladstone's name goes for little at public meetings. Yours is the only one which makes any one stand up and cheer.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Dec. 1, 1885.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I quite agree with you. But would it not be well to make it clear that the Election was run on the Whig and not on the Tory Programme?[1]

I should imagine that the Irish will come round. The aim of the Conservatives will be to keep in a short time with their aid, then to quarrel with them, and to seek to hold their own against the Irish and the Radicals by a combination with the Whigs. This scheme Randolph Churchill explained to me a short time ago.

If G. O. M. still hankers after an alliance with the Irish, it may be possible to arrange one, which would cause a split between him and his Whig friends. He was always wanting to know as soon as possible what could be effected, because he said that he wanted time to gain over some of his late colleagues.

I am not the least surprised at results. Putting aside the Irish vote and bad times, was it likely that there would be great enthusiasm for a cause, which was explained to be to relegate everything of importance to the dim distant future, and to unite in order to bring back to power the old lot, with all their doubts and hesitations, under a leader who was always implying, without meaning it, that he meant to retire?—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

SION MANSIONS, BRIGHTON, Dec. 3, 1885.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—This afternoon I got a telegram

[1] The election ran from Nov. 23 to Dec. 19. The result was that 333 Liberals were returned, 251 Conservatives, and 86 Parnellites.

from Randolph to say he was coming down, and I have had him here all the evening.

He says (but don't have it from me) that, if a vote of want of confidence is not proposed, they will adjourn for three weeks after the Speaker is chosen. If they have a majority with the Irish, he says that they are inclined to throw their Speaker as a sop to the Irish, and evidently he has a scheme in his head to get Hicks-Beach elected Speaker, and to take his place himself.

He told me that he had given in a memorandum to Lord Salisbury about the state of parties in the House of Commons, in which he puts down Hartington as worth 200 votes, and you for the balance. They intend to give a *non possumus* to all proposals for Home Rule, and they expect to be supported by Hartington, even if the G. O. M. goes for Home Rule. Salisbury is ready to resign the Premiership to Hartington if necessary, and the new Party is to be called the "Coalition Party." It appears that the G. O. M. (but this I have vowed not to tell) has given in to the Queen a scheme of Home Rule, with a sort of Irish President at the head, who is to be deposed by the Queen and Council, if necessary.

Should they not be turned out, they will at once start a discussion on Procedure.

Is not the cow working wonders for us? Next time we must have an urban cow.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

HIGHBURY, BIRMINGHAM, Dec. 4, 1885.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,— . . . The "urban cow" is the great difficulty. I put my money on free schools, but, judging by London, the electors do not care much about it.

Things are going better for us. I was forced to speak yesterday at Leicester, and you will see I had a dig at the Whigs. I will drive the knife in on the 17th.

Surely Hartington will not be such a fool as to make a coalition. If he is inclined that way I should be happy to give him a lift. It would be the making of the Radical party.

If the Tories go against Peel they will irritate Hartington and the Moderates. I don't care a straw either way.

I should warmly support any proposals for amendment of Procedure which gave more power to the majority.—Yours truly,

J. Chamberlain.

P. S.—We must keep the Tories in for some time. If R. Churchill will not play the fool, I certainly should not be inclined to prefer a weak Liberal or Coalition Government to a weak Tory one. His best policy is to leave us to deal with the Whigs and not to compel us to unite the party against the Tories.—Yours,

J. C.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

Highbury, Birmingham, Dec. 7, 1885.

Dear Labouchere,— . . . The G. O. M. is very anxious to come in again. I am not, and I think we must sit on his Irish proposals. It will require a careful steering to keep the Radical boat head to the wind.—Yours very truly,

J. Chamberlain.

Foljambe is out, for which I am devoutly thankful. There goes another Moderate Liberal and Hartington's speech did not help him. I hope E. Cavendish will go too. He is not safe.

Mr. T. M. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

Dublin, Dec. 7, 1885.

My dear L.,—Thanks for your postings. As far as I can make out your party will be in a minority of 5 or 6 when all is over a couple of days hence. We shall have 86 in our party. I have not seen Parnell for over a fortnight and know nothing of his mind except that I think it significant he should have told his interviewer that he expected Home Rule from the Liberals. This, of course may have been a hint to prick up Salisbury, and it remains to be seen how it will work. But in my opinion we have no course but to turn out the Tories. Eighteen of their men are Irish, who would oppose tooth and nail every concession to us, and as they would vote against their own party on H. R. (supposing "Barkis is willing") that would count 36 against

them, which, of course, would hardly be made up to them by Liberal votes, as your party, with three or four exceptions, would stand coldly aside and rejoice to see them and us, combined, put in a minority. Looking at the matter in the most cynical manner, therefore, I don't see what P. can do but put out the Conservatives. With us you would have such an immense majority that you could spare the desertion of a score of rats amongst the Whigs, while many of the Borough Conservatives who owe their seats to us might abstain from a H. R. division.

As to the means of putting them out, I assume, if we were agreed as to terms, that it would be easy to move an amendment to the Address which we could support. Whether this should have relation directly to Ireland is a matter for the strategists of your party to consider, as while it would suit our book perfectly it might not rally all your men and might lead to inconvenient debate. It would, however, look odd in us, after denouncing you so bitterly, to put you in straightway on some by-issue, not in relation to self-government, and, moreover, as we should be strictly "dark horses" as to which side we should support, an Irish amendment would have the advantage of extracting from ministers certain expressions or promises in order to fetch us, which could be made great capital out of afterwards by you. Without having thought deeply on the strategical aspect of the situation, it occurs to me that the best thing would be to have an understanding with the Liberals and "play" the Government for a few weeks with the Irish fly to see would it rise, without actually landing them. Both you and we would then get time to see their programme and how their party swallowed it—so as to corner them afterwards.

It is clear no scheme of Home Rule can be carried through the Lords without a dissolution, and then, with our help, you could have a majority of 200 over the Tories. But we should have a good registration of Voters' Bill passed first and some amendments of the Ballot Act. I think your people should at once get into touch with Parnell. He went to England this morning and should be seen by some one from your side. I agree with you that Mr. Gladstone alone can settle the Irish question. He is the only man with head and heart for the task, and the only man who can reduce to decency the contemptible cads who so largely

composed the last Liberal party. I thank God that so many of the howlers and gloaters over our sufferings have met their fate at the polls.—Yours,

T. M. Healy.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

Brighton, Dec. 8, 1885.

My dear Chamberlain,—I have just got a letter from Herbert Gladstone, which I have sent on to Healy.[1]. . .

I have replied that it is very questionable whether any sort of arrangement can be come to with Parnell, but that, if so, it will be necessary for "Herbert" to explain precisely "logical issues and solid facts"—or, in other words, to let us have the maximum of concession.

I doubt Parnell agreeing to any scheme which "Herbert" may propose, their views are so divergent. But suppose that he does—would it not be well to use the G. .O. M. to settle this question and get it out of the way. If he agrees with Parnell, he will not agree long with his Whig friends. So soon as the Irish question is over, something might be done to separate the Whigs entirely from the Radicals—or at least something to cause the G. O. M. to begin those ten years of probation which he requires before meeting his Maker.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. T. M. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

Dublin, Dec. 10, 1885.

My dear L.,—Better try, would a letter to Parnell at 9 Palace Chambers, Westminster, find him, and ask him to make an appointment with you. There is no necessity to refer him to the correspondence that has taken place, but tell what you feel in a position to say on behalf of your party leaders. He must see that Gladstone must come in if we are to get anything, and the only thing I see to be settled is the ritual to be observed in

[1] Mr. Labouchere quotes the greater part of a letter from Mr. Herbert Gladstone, dated Dec. 7, in which Mr. Herbert Gladstone urges the all importance of the Irish question, and the necessity of ascertaining the plans of the Irish leaders.

bowing the Government out. I presume he will move an amendment to the Address, unless he has some satisfactory pledge from Salisbury, which I don't believe, and I don't believe in the power of Salisbury or anybody else to throw dust in Parnell's eyes. "Hard cash"[1] or a Catholic University won't bait the Tory hook for us to swallow. I 'm for the whole hog or none. I think it would be important if we could have some understanding as to the procedure, we, in the opinion of your leaders, should adopt as to the terms of an amendment to the Address. They might prefer it should be one they could speak on and not support, or both support and speak on. The latter seems most convenient in case it is thought better to turn the Government out immediately, so as to allow of the re-election of the new Ministers. My view, however, is (and it is not a strong one, because I have not heard the arguments contra) that it would be better to keep the Tories in a little for the reasons previously given, and also for the additional one that once they accept our help they will all be tarred with the Irish brush, and cannot afterwards complain of your party accepting an alliance by which they are not ashamed to profit. "Sour Grapes" would then be a complete answer to them in opposition.

The stupidity of men like Harcourt calling us "Fenians" is inconceivable. Personally I should not object to the epithet, which I regard by no means an ignoble one, but I can well forecast the use Churchill would make of it in opposition with Sir William in power by grace of the "Fenian" vote. "The Gods themselves fight in vain against stupidity."

If you exercise any control over the *Daily News*, it ought to keep your party straight by purging it of the rancour of defeat. Swear at us in private as much as you like, but avoid flinging bricks of the boomerang make. The *Daily News* calling the Anglo-Irish voters "clots of turbid intrigue" must have cost you a trifle at the polls. We can slang you *de droit* because we are powerless and irresponsible, but a governing body shall go "all delicately marching in most pellucid air." Excuse the philosophy! —Yours,

T. M. Healy.

[1] The term "hard cash" is quoted from the letter of Dec. 7, from Mr. Herbert Gladstone to Mr. Labouchere, already referred to (see note page 273).

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

40 Prince's Gardens, S. W., Dec. 11, 1885.

My dear Labouchere,—There is much in what you say, but the fear is that anything like a bargain with the Irish would be resented by the English and Scotch workmen and that a Tory-Whig Coalition appealing to their prejudices against a Radical-Parnellite alliance would carry all before them then. This is a real danger. I am convinced, from personal observation, that the workmen will not stand much more in the way of Irish conciliation or concessions to Parnell.

I am clear that we had better bide our time and rub the Tories' noses well in the mess they have made. Till the 16th.—Yours,

J. Chamberlain.

Mr. Parnell to Mr. Labouchere

Irish Parliamentary Offices,
London, S. W., Dec. 17, 1885.

Dear Labouchere,—I have only just opened your letters, as I have not been in London for some time. I will try and give you notice the next time I am in town, but my present impression is that it would be better to await events, and see what attitude the two English Parties may take towards each other at the commencement of the new Parliament.—Yours sincerely,

Chas. S. Parnell.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Mansions,
St. James's Park, Dec. 19, 1885.

My dear Chamberlain,—I wrote to Hawarden in the sense we agreed on respecting your views—keeping, however, a good deal to the vague.

Yesterday morning came a letter from Parnell. Had only just received my letter, was passing through London, would say when he was coming back. Dilatory as usual. In the afternoon Healy arrived. He stayed six hours.

The sum of all amounted to this:

Parnell is half mad. We always act without him. He accepts this position; if he did not we should overlook him. Do not trouble yourself about him. Dillon, M'Carthy, O'Brien, Harrington, and I settle everything. When we agree, no one can disagree. We are all for an arrangement with the G. O. M. on terms. We are forming a "Cabinet." We shall choose it. We shall pass what we like in this Cabinet. We have never yet let out any secret. The Kilmainham revelations were let out by Forster and O'Shea.

Terms.—G. O. M.'s plan.

Details.—We agree to nomination for two Parliaments or five years; we like it, for we want to hold our own against Fenians. Protestant religious bodies may, if wished, elect representatives.

On contracts, we would agree to an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords.

We would agree to any landlord having the right to sell his land to Irish State on valuation by present Commissioners, provided that all value of tenants' improvements were deducted. We do not go so far in land matters as Chamberlain—certainly not further.

On veto. We could not accept the veto of the Imperial Parliament. This is the corner-stone of independence in the minds of Irishmen. Several plans were suggested—two-thirds majority, etc. I think something might be worked out by means of a sound Privy Council.

We would assent to reasonable amendments by the Lords, but we should ask to be consulted.

We have no objection to a Prince. This would be a great sop to the "Loyalists."

Of course we must have the Police. We would reduce them to 3000—there are too many.

We claim to pay a quota—to raise this quota as we like; there is no fear of Protection. Parnell and some Belfast manufacturers are the only Protectionists in Ireland. Perhaps, however, we might give bounties for a time. If we did, we should pay them, not you.

If Bill thrown out in Lords, an Autumn Session; if thrown out again, to be brought in again in 1886, unless Mr. Gladstone prefers a dissolution.

No Procedure resolutions until Home Rule settled.

There are only three Judges to whom we object. One is old and deaf and wants to retire, another is dying (Lawson).

If terms agreed to, never to come out that there were negotiations. We would regard ourselves as members of the Liberal party; occasionally indulge like you Radicals in a wild-cat vote, but vote with Liberals on all Parliamentary issues.

I have sent this with a lot more details to Hawarden.

Rosebery writes to tell me that the "revelations" are well received in Scotland, and that there will be no difficulty there.[1]

Do pray think how very advantageous it will be to get rid of these Irish.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, ST. JAMES'S PARK,
Sunday, Dec. 21, 1885.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Healy came again to-day, and he tells me that the whole gang are now ready to accept the terms—provided that they are the terms. He stands absolutely against an Imperial Parliament veto and says that it is impossible.

I proposed this:

A Royal Prince—a sort of King Log.

The reorganisation of the Irish Privy Council on a fair and reasonable basis.

The veto to be the Governor acting by the advice of the Privy Council—*i. e.*, of a majority.

The Governor to be changed on petition of two-thirds of the Assembly.

He thinks that this would do, and I have sent it to Hawarden.

Healy has seen Parnell, and, without speaking to him about negotiations, he came to the conclusion that there will be no opposition there.

The Conservatives, I hear, have it in consideration to submit the Queen's Speech immediately, and to put up one of their men

[1] Statement as to Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Scheme was published in the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Standard* on December 17, and in the *Times* and other London papers of December 18.

to propose a vote of confidence, if there be no amendment on our side.

I asked Healy what the Irish would do then? He said, "If nothing is settled, walk out probably." "Then?" I asked. "Go with the Conservatives and turn out the Liberals."

But it seems to me that, without being sure of the support of the Irish, Mr. Gladstone could hardly take office.

If so, what then? Hartington?

Hartington is cuts with Churchill. He says that he has insulted him in his speeches, and that he will never speak to him again.

Churchill told me a few weeks ago that the Conservatives were determined to dissolve, if Home Rule were attempted, in order to protect the House of Lords. Would they have the courage to dissolve at once? Are they not rather calculating on Mr. Gladstone not being able to form a Government, and either coming back with the Whigs, or dissolving on the ground of a deadlock?

How the revelation came out was this:

Herbert Gladstone told Reed of the Leeds paper his father's views. Reed told Mudford. Could this have been stupidity, or was it intentional by order of Papa?

The *Pall Mall* of yesterday was directly inspired from Hawarden. The channel was Norman. Certainly the ways of Mr. Gladstone are rather more mysterious than those of the Heathen Chinee. My reading of it is that he is simply insane to come in. . . . The Irish are suspicious of him, and intend to have things clear before they support him. Parnell says that he has a way of getting people to agree with him by the enunciation of generalities, but that when he has got what he wants, his general principles are not carried out as might have been anticipated. This is so true that I could not deny myself the pleasure of letting him know it. In this case, he will have to be a good deal more definite, if he is to count on the Irish.

My own conviction is that if the Irish get Home Rule, they will—with the exception of the land question—surprise us by their conservatism. Their first thing will be to pass some sort of very drastic legislation against the Fenians.

What the next step will be, I don't exactly know. The Irish too want to know.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury

India Office, Dec. 22, 1885.

. . . Now I have a great deal to tell you Labouchere came to see me this morning. He asked me our intentions. I gave him the following information. I can rely upon him:

(1) That there would be no motion for adjournment after the 12th, but that business would be immediately procceeded with after three or four days' swearing. On this he said that, if we liked to go out on a motion for adjournment, he thought the other side might accommodate us. I told him that such an ineffably silly idea had never entered our heads. Then he told me that he had been asked whether he could ascertain if a certain statement as to a Tory Home Rule measure which appeared recently in the *Dublin Daily Express* was Ashbourne's measure, and if the Tories meant to say "Aye" or "No" to Home Rule; to which I replied that it had never crossed the mind of any member of the Government to dream even of departing from an absolute unqualified "No," and that all statements as to Ashbourne's plan were merely the folly of the *Daily News*. Then I was very much upset, for he proceeded to tell me that, on Sunday week last, Lord Carnarvon had met Justin M'Carthy, and had confided to him that he was in favour of Home Rule in some shape, but that his colleagues and his party were not ready, and asked whether Justin M'Carthy's party would agree to an enquiry, which he thought there was a chance of the Government agreeing to, and which would educate his colleagues and his party if granted and carried through. I was consternated, but replied that such a statement was an obvious lie; but, between ourselves, I fear it is not—perhaps not even an exaggeration or a misrepresentation. Justin M'Carthy is on the staff of the *Daily News*. Labouchere is one of the proprietors, and I cannot imagine any motive for his inventing such a statement. If it is true, Lord Carnarvon has played the devil. Then I told Labouchere that if the G. O. M. announced any Home Rule project, or indicated any such project and, by so doing, placed the Government in a minority, resignation was not the only course; but that there was another alternative which might even be announced in debate, and the announcement of which might complete the squandering

of the Liberal party, and that his friend at Hawarden had better not omit altogether that card from his calculations as to his opponents' hands. Lastly, I communicated to him that, even if the Government went out and Gladstone introduced a Home Rule Bill, I should not hesitate, if other circumstances were favourable, to agitate Ulster even to resistance beyond constitutional limits; that Lancashire would follow Ulster, and would lead England; and that he was at liberty to communicate this fact to the G. O. M.[1]

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate,
Dec. 22, 1885.

My dear Chamberlain,—I got a long letter from Hawarden this morning. The substance is, "Let the Irish get a positive assurance from the Conservatives that they will do nothing, and his tongue will be free." This I send to Healy.

I have been spending the morning with Churchill. His plan is this. Queen's Speech at once—in address an expression of confidence. Liberals to draw G. O. M., Churchill to get up and say that obviously he intends to propose Home Rule. If so, adverse vote will be followed by dissolution. Will they dare to do this? Churchill says that they will, and that I might privately tell Mr. Gladstone this.

He vowed that Brett had given Parnell a written statement from Mr. Gladstone.

Healy told me to ask whether there were any direct negotiations with Parnell.

Hawarden replies: "There are no negotiations going on between Parnell and my father, who has constantly from the first, declared, etc., etc."

Who are we to believe? Mr. Gladstone, as we know, has a very magnificent conscience, but he will finish by being too clever by half, if he tries to play Healy off against Parnell, who, as I told you, is not much more than a figurehead.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

[1] Winston Spencer Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, vol. ii.

P. S.—Churchill says that they hear that Goschen has been playing a double game—that to win over Hartington he became a Balaam.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Dec. 23, 1885.

My dear Chamberlain,—Has this occurred to you? The Whigs evidently will not stand Mr. Gladstone's proposals. If you therefore were to rally to them, you would clear the nest of these nuisances, and, as Mr. Gladstone cannot last very long, become the leader of the Opposition or of the Government—a consummation that we all want.

I think that the Customs matter would not be a *sine qua non*.

Imperial matters would be few. We are against wars. The main Imperial question would be for extra money—in case of wars. In the main the Irish would be with us—their views about land are much yours—I should fancy therefore that, provided we have a clear distinction between local and imperial affairs, we should soon be the very best of friends.

That Mr. Gladstone will go on, I think pretty certain, because—excellent and good man as he is—he sees that *his* only chance is to get the Irish. He is now engaged in a game of dodging. He has invented as usual a "principle"—that he can go into no details until he officially knows that the Government will do nothing. The object is to get the Irish on generalities. They, however, are quite up to this, and even supposing that they were to vote with us, they would at once turn him out, if he were to play pranks. I do not quite therefore see how he could come in without some sort of secret understanding with them.

Now, what would satisfy them?

On customs, as I have said, there would be no great difficulty.

Ditto on protection to minorities.

Remains the veto.

They are anxious to get over it, but cannot accept the Imperial Parliament. Would it be to our advantage that they should? We should be continually having rows in Parliament about their Acts.

When I saw Healy on Sunday I suggested this:

A King Log in the person of a Member of the Royal Family.

The veto to be exercised by King Log with the consent of his Privy Council.

The Privy Council to be entirely reorganised, or the present lot to be swamped by men—not ultras, but of moderate character.

Things would then work out by some of the Irish Ministers being made Privy Councillors.

This he said the Irish would accept.

Now, with such a plan, with nominated Members for five years, and with representation of Protestant Synods and such like bodies, would there be much fear?

What the Irish are afraid of are the Fenians. This is why they snap at nominated Members, although they may perhaps openly protest.

If I can get hold of Morley, I will have a talk with him; he is, I think, of a secretive nature.

Suppose that the worst occurs—an immediate dissolution—the rural cow would still do its work, for it might be put that the Tories are really dissolving not for Ireland but to prevent the cow being given. On other urban cows Mr. Gladstone would be very much in your hands, for to get into power, I really believe that he would not only give up Ireland, but Mrs. Gladstone and Herbert.

Churchill is going to Ireland. It is an old promise, he says, to go for Christmas to Fitzgibbon, and nothing to do with politics. Did I tell you that when I said that I knew that Carnarvon had been intriguing with Archbishop Walsh, he said that Walsh was a very ambitious man, and would not long remain under Parnell, and that Carnarvon had tried to square the Education question with him?

Let us even suppose that we are beaten at the elections. There would a a Tory-Whig Government. How long would it last?

Hartington seems to be on bad terms all round. Churchill tells me that he (Hartington) declines to meet him or speak to him on the score of his speeches. Evidently he is confederating with Goschen, and probably Forster will become a third in the triumvirate? They do not strike me as precisely the men who will ever act with you, unless you knock under to them.

It is by no means certain that we should be beaten at an election. Mr. Gladstone is still a power. Rosebery says that the Scotch are all right. The Irish vote has turned and will turn many elections. Our cards, therefore, if boldly and well played, are by no means such as would warrant the hands being thrown up.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

P. S.—Is Churchill reckoning with his party when he talks about an immediate dissolution? How will its Members like being sent back to their Constituents? Many are hard up.

Mr. T. M. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

Dublin, Dec. 23, 1885.

My dear L.,—Thanks for your views. If Churchill and his lot want to stay in, in order to thwart us and Mr. Gladstone, then I say, by all means, let them have a few months office, and let us give them—well—purgatory for a bit and see how they take it. It seems to me that opinion is not quite ripe enough yet amongst your party to swallow strong meat. I therefore think a while in the cold would teach them whether Mr. Gladstone was wiser than the tuppence ha-penny intelligence of his rank and file. What the God-fearing Radical evidently wants is a course of Tory slaughter abroad, and sixpence on the income tax, and we are just the boys to help them to it. Opinion here in loyalist circles seems to take it for granted that Gladstone needs a check from his own party, and I confess it has somewhat the aspect of it. So it seems to me we shall have to turn round and "educate" the Liberal party, since they won't allow the greatest man they ever had to do so. A pretty mess they will be in, unless they seize this opportunity under his leadership of consolidating their party. I should like to know what would become of them without Gladstone? You would have Chamberlain and Hartington cutting each other's throats and the Tories standing laughing by, profiting by your divisions! And what should we be doing? You may be sure whatever was worst for the Liberal party. You may dissolve fifty times, but until you dissolve us out of existence, there we 'll be, a thorn—aye, a bayonet in your sides. Here we were with the chance of getting all Ireland

round to some moderate scheme that would end for ever the feud between the two countries, and now it appears that some gentlemen who were born yesterday, and could n't tell the difference between a Moonlighter and an Orangeman, propose to spoil the whole thing—and in the interest of the "Empire" forsooth. I venture to think that the statesman who had the boldness to think out some proposition for the pacification of this island—small as it is—is the best friend the Empire has had for many a long day! My heart is sick when I read the extracts telegraphed from the English papers to think these are the idiots we have to deal with and to argue with. It is almost a justification of O'Donovan Rossa. They have Moses and the Prophets, but they want a sign from Heaven. Of course, I know there are ten thousand difficult details to be settled, but these men don't want to settle anything. They have some party dodge to serve, and Ireland is their happy hunting ground. Let them take care that the quarrel is not a poisoned morsel for their dogs. Churchill babbles of coming over to rouse the Orangemen! *Je lui promets des émotions*. He had better bring Gorst with him to rally the "re-actionary Ulster members." If these men think as well as talk this *blague*, England is very lucky in her rulers.

But to quit apostrophe (which you must pardon) what are we to do? Can we expect Mr. Gladstone to bear the battle on his single shield? Is it not plain that if we plunge into Home Rule plans just now before your intelligent public apply their enlightened minds to it we shall get far less than what we should get by waiting and worrying you for a few years? We are all young, and though British saws won't bear me out, you are a very fickle and unstable people, while ours has the tenacity of 700 years to carry us through. We can wait awhile and see who gets the worst of it, and if we are beaten in our time—well, there are plenty of young men and young women in Ireland to breed future difficulties for you. Some of us thought as Nationalists we were making a great sacrifice in being willing to give up our ideals, but the spirit in which we are met shows how much our surrender is appreciated by the individuals who subscribed for cartridges for the Hungarians, Italians, and Poles. The curse of being the sport of your two parties is in itself the best argument for the necessity of Home Rule.

As for Churchill, a great deal of what he told you I take to be bluff—told for the purposes of intimidation. I don't believe they 'd dissolve, and if they are so inclined we ought not to give them the chance but help them over the stile, in order to trip them up at some better opportunity. When we beat them a few times, say on their estimates, and worry them on adjournments and motions, they will be in a much less heroic mood than they are now. Slow poison is a better medicine for them than the happy dispatch! By hanging on their skirts for a few weeks, snubbing them and humiliating them at every opportunity, they will be in a much more reasonable frame of mind than they are now, and meantime perhaps your young lions could be reduced to reason and your old ones have their claws trimmed. It is no good talking about the details of Home Rule, when the very mention of the word gives half the Liberal party the shivers. The men that won't take Mr. Gladstone for a leader to-day will have to take Mr. Parnell to-morrow, for assuredly things cannot rest as they are. Mr. Gladstone's enemies just now are England's and Ireland's worst enemies also. He alone can settle the question moderately and satisfactorily, yet he is assailed by his own party as if he were some reckless junior acting not from the ripeness of knowledge and sagacity, but through some adolescent's lust of untasted power! Your party ought to get up an altar to Mundella and put his long nose in the tabernacle. It is sweet to know that he has controlled the education of British youth.

A happy Christmas to you, my dear Labouchere.

T. M. Healy.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

Highbury, Moor Green,
Birmingham, Dec. 23, 1885.

My dear Labouchere,—Surely Randolph's policy will not work. A dissolution within a few weeks of the General Election would be very unpopular and indeed unjustifiable, unless the whole Liberal party followed Mr. Gladstone in a Home Rule proposal. But it is clear he will be left in the lurch, if he proposes it, by the majority of the party, and in these circumstances

a dissolution would not help the Tories, and would probably unite the Liberals under Hartington—while Mr. Gladstone would retire.

I should have thought the Tory game would have been to go out and to leave Mr. Gladstone to form a Government if he can.

Unless he repudiates Home Rule this would be impossible, while if he does repudiate it he would have the Irish against him and could not get on for a month.

I shall be in London on the 4th January, and could dine with you to meet Randolph on that evening—if convenient.

I shall not be up again till the 11th. Have they finally settled to go straight on with the address and without any adjournment?—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Labouchere

INDIA OFFICE, Dec. 24, 1885.

DEAR LABOUCHERE,—I am engaged to be at Hatfield on the 4th. That compared morally with your proposed "festin" will be as Heaven is to Hell, but my sinful spirit will sigh regretfully after Hell. I am making enquiries as to your letter which you suggested to me yesterday, but have not yet received a reply.

I thought over Justin M'Carthy's story about Carnarvon. It must be a lie, for on Sunday last the latter was in London. He came over on the Friday previous for the Cabinets on the following Monday and Tuesday.—Yours ever,

RANDOLPH S. C.

P. S.—The weak point of your accusation in this week's *Truth* of treachery on the part of the Government is that the announcement of Gladstone's having written a letter to the Queen first appeared in *The Daily News!*[1]

Now we are not likely to take Mr. Hill[2] as our confidant.

[1] In *Truth* of December 24, Mr. Labouchere commented on his own assertion that a letter Mr. Gladstone had written to the Queen was communicated by her to Lord Salisbury, who, in his turn, communicated some of its contents to the *Standard*.

[2] Editor of the *Daily News* from 1868 till 1886.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Dec. 24, 1885.

My dear Chamberlain,—Churchill writes:

"I am engaged to be at Hatfield on the 4th. That, compared with the society of you and 'Joe,' ought to be as Heaven is to Hell, but my sinful spirit sighs regretfully after Hell."

They go on without adjournment, estimating that the swearing can be done in three or four days.

Rosebery writes to say that he has heard nothing from Hawarden since he wrote urging silence, a suggestion which he supposed was not appreciated. All I know, he says, is that Mr. Gladstone is devilish in earnest about the matter.

Supposing that the Radicals went against Home Rule, the fight with the Irish would be long. Don't you think that the country would think that it would be better fought by the Conservatives than by the Radicals? They would—with pleasure—make it last long. It would be like the French wars to Pitt.

I saw Harcourt yesterday. He told me that he had been to see you, and seemed to me sitting on the fence. "What I am thinking of," he said, "is that if the Irish found that they could get nothing, they would resort again to dynamite." I told him that I thought that *his* life would not be worth a week's purchase. Was there ever such a timorous Sambo?

Henry Oppenheim tells me that Hartington dined with him a few days ago, and that so far as he could make out he seemed inclined to stand by Mr. Gladstone.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

Highbury, Moor Green,
Birmingham, Dec. 24, 1885.

My dear Labouchere,—I do not think the Irish proposals are possible. If they refuse control of Imperial Parliament, there is really nothing left but separation. A hybrid arrangement with nominations, Privy Councils, etc., would not stand

examination and would be a perpetual source of friction and further trouble.

I do not believe in their Conservative legislation. They mean it, but the American Fenians would be too strong for them.

There is much fascination in your suggestion of Radical policy, especially in the chance of dishing the Whigs whom I hate more than the Tories.

But it won't do. English opinion is set strongly against Home Rule and the Radical party might be permanently (*i. e.* for our time) discredited by a concession on this point.

We must "lie low" and watch—avoiding positive committal as far as possible.

Did I tell you that the G. O. M. thanked me for my last speech?

I doubt if he has made up his own mind yet or formulated any definite scheme.

He has several times repeated the phrase "supremacy of Parliament."

I am informed on good authority—the best in fact—that there is no truth in the statement that he has submitted a statement to the Queen. As Randolph is quite wrong about this, he must be taken as a doubtful authority in other matters also.

I suppose that if he is going to Ireland he will not be back in time for dinner on the 4th.—Yours ever,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, ST. JAMES'S PARK,
Christmas Day, 1885.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—This is Churchill's statement about the Queen. When they came in they were told that there was a Home Rule scheme of Mr. Gladstone's and it was shown to Salisbury. I suspect that it is true, for no sooner was Mr. Gladstone out than Herbert began—on the ground that his father wanted exactly to know the Irish minimum, in order to have time to treat the matter with his friends.

I place as the basis of Mr. Gladstone's action an almost insane desire to come into office. Now he knows that so far as *he* is

concerned, this can only be done by squaring the Irish. At 76 a waiting policy may be a patriotic one, but it is one of personal effacement. This is not precisely the line of our revered leader.

Randolph *says* he is only going to Ireland, as he has done on previous years, to pass Christmas with Fitzgibbon.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

P. S.—Healy and I have elaborated a letter containing the Irish minimum.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Labouchere

India Office, Dec. 25, 1885.

Dear Labouchere,—My correspondent with whom you thought you might correspond with advantage does not wish now to be drawn.

Very Private. G. O. M. has written what is described to me as a "marvellous letter" to Arthur Balfour, to the effect that he thinks "it will be a public calamity if this great question should fall into the line of party conflict," and saying that he desires the question should be settled by the present Government. He be damned!—Yours ever,

Randolph S. C.

Mr. T. M. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

Dublin, Xmas, 1885.

My dear L.,—It may be that Brett is the go-between, and therefore that Gladstone could use the views of others to head off Parnell. Now as I believe we should speak with one voice and chime the same note, I don't think it would be well for me to say anything at present beyond thanking you for all your kindness. I mean anything to any one but yourself. Harcourt's views quite interest me, and he is quite right, for if our people are disappointed after the visions held out to them, they cannot be held in. This country could easily be made ungovernable so far as the collection of rent or legal process is concerned, and the obstructors would find they were not dealing with playboys but

with resolute men. It is because I am for peace and feel the necessity for it that I am willing to accept any reasonable settlement, as things could not go on as they are for very long. If prices next year are as bad as this the country will not be habitable in any case for rackrenters.

I can hardly believe the Tories would dissolve if your party shows itself united. It is on your divided counsels they reckon. If a big vote goes against them it will knock the bottom out of their mutterings. Besides supposing the dissolution goes against them, they must count the cost. Defeat would mean the instant carrying of any schemes Gladstone liked to put forward and no nonsense from the Lords. The Peers could not reject it, and if they did and Gladstone threatened to dissolve against their existence—*bon soir!* I am firmer therefore in my opinion that Randolph's talk was mere funkee-funkee, a train laid to explode in Hawarden, and I shall be surprised if it goes off.

Your fellows will never realise the price they will be willing to pay us until they see the Market opened and a wretched minority sitting and smiling across the floor from the seats they themselves should recline on! Their teeth won't begin to water till the 12th Jan. Therefore I believe a waiting game is our game, for surely it is of as much consequence to your men that they should govern England as it is to ours that they should govern Ireland? The fact that Parnell's reserve is so provoking to the English is his best justification in our minds. Chamberlain's point about whether the Imperial Ministry which enjoyed the confidence of the English on Home affairs should resign if defeated by our help on foreign questions is a poser. It seems to me the federal idea cannot work unless you too have a local and an Imperial Parliament.—Yours,

T. M. Healy.

Mr. Labouchere to "The Times"[1]

10 Queen Anne's Gate, S. W., Dec. 26, 1885.

"WHAT THE PARNELLITES WOULD ACCEPT."

Sir,—During the last Parliament I voted frequently with the Irish members against the Government. I did so because I was

[1] *Times*, Dec. 28, 1885.

opposed to exceptional measures of coercion, and believed that the remedy for Irish wrongs consisted in allowing Ireland to manage her own affairs, subject to full guarantee being given for the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire. In this view it would appear that I was only in advance by a year or two of the opinions of many Liberals and Radicals and of some Conservatives.

Owing to the course of action which I pursued, I was thrown into personal and friendly relations with many of the Irish and Parliamentary party, which relations I have maintained, and I think I am able to form a pretty accurate estimate of their views.

First, however, I will say with your permission a word respecting Irish opinion, and the position, so far as I can judge it, of the Irish political leaders. Among those of them opposed to the present state of things the majority are not separatists, some because they are in favour of the Union with the British Isles, others because they are aware that separation is practically impossible. Those who aspire to separation are an infinitesimal minority, and they subordinate their opinions to those of their colleagues.

Throughout Ireland a passionate desire for Home Rule is entertained by all with the exception of the landlords, the officials, and the Orangemen. A good many of the landlords are disposed, however, to rally to it, while the area over which the Orangemen hold sway is growing smaller and smaller every year. Many of the Presbyterians of Ulster have already thrown in their lot with the Home Rulers. There is now but one single northern Irish county left which does not return a Parnellite — viz. Antrim. In four Ulster counties—Monaghan, Cavan, Donegal, and Fermanaugh—no one but Parnellites have been chosen.

The desire for Home Rule is irrespective of any wish to alter the land system, although this wish is an important factor in Irish feeling. Agriculture is almost the only industry in Ireland, and one reason why the landlords are disliked is that, with some few exceptions, they have set themselves in antagonism to the aspirations of the nation for Home Rule. The Land Act has disappointed and dissatisfied every one, for, while the landlords declare that their property has been confiscated, the farmers cry out that their property—*i. e.* their improvements, have been handed over to be rented for the landlords' benefit in the teeth

of the Healy clause. It is hopeless to suppose that an Imperial Parliament, composed of a majority of gentlemen, who know very little about the real merits of the case, can settle this great question, at which it has been tinkering for generations, and I, as an Englishman, object to have my time taken up in discussing it any more, and trying to accommodate the differences between Irish renters and Irish rentees. Mr. Chamberlain has rightly objected to the Imperial Exchequer being saddled with purchase money to be paid to the landlords, and I think our duty to them would be performed if we were to insist, in any settlement of the Irish question, that they shall be entitled to call on the Irish treasury for a fair price for their estates whenever they want to sell them, due regard being had to the tenants' statutably recognised ownership of his improvements. Thus the landlords, if they object to live in an island, the inhabitants of which enjoy the advantage of self-government, would be able to leave it with the equivalent for their land in their pockets in hard cash. With their departure the police difficulty would disappear, and with it the necessity of England paying £1,500,000 per annum for the Royal Irish Constabulary, although the Irish insist that they only require a force of ¼ this size, and are willing to pay for it themselves.

Speaking generally, and if the land system were satisfactorily settled, it may be said that the Irish are not Radicals in one sense of the word. Their habit of thought is Conservative. They are, like the French, somewhat too inclined to look and state interference in everything. Their tendency is, as M. Guizot said of the French, to fall into a division between administrators and administered. Their hostility to law is not to law abstractedly, but to the law as presenting what they regard as an alien ascendency. I am inclined to think that, had they a Parliament of their own, they would surprise us by their Conservative legislation.

Apart from the Nationalists, who form the great bulk of the nation, are the Fenians. They are comparatively speaking few in number. Their strength consists in being able to tell the Irish that Home Rule never will be granted, and that Ireland must either separate from us, or be ruled by us in local as well as in Imperial affairs.

That the Nationalists have to a certain extent acted with the Fenians is true. But could they do otherwise? They had to fight against a common opponent. Between a Nationalist and a Fenian there is as much difference as between the most moderate Whig Squire who sat in last Parliament on the Liberal benches and me. Yet we both voted frequently together against the Conservatives. The Nationalists are the Girondists, the Fenians are the Jacobins. Like the Girondists they make common cause against a common enemy. (*He carries on this simile lengthily.*) Mr. Parnell and his political friends have substituted constitutional agitation for lawless and revolutionary agitation. He has only succeeded in this by persuading his countrymen that his action will result in success. If he be doomed to failure, the Fenians will once more gain the upper hand in Ireland.

The *Times* has more than once suggested that the Irish Parliamentary party should state precisely what they want. They want a Parliament. How possibly can they be expected to say officially to what limitations and to what restrictions they would submit for the sake of a definite settlement before some responsible English statesman, with a strong following at his back, is prepared to give them a Parliament? They would indeed be fools were they to make such a tactical blunder. In any negotiation of which I have ever read, bases are agreed on before either party—and certainly before the weaker party—specifies details.

I think, however, I am not far wrong in saying the following scheme would be accepted:

1. Representation in the Imperial Parliament upon Imperial matteres alone. This would require a hard and fast definition as to what is Imperial and what is local, together with, as in the United States, some legal tribunal of appeal.

The Army, the Navy, the protection of the British Isles, and the commercial and political relations with foreign nations would be regarded as Imperial matters, and probably there would be no insuperable difficulty—if it were deemed expedient—in arranging a Customs Union, such as that of the German Zollverein before the German Empire came into existence, leaving it to the Irish to foster their industries, if they please, by means of bounties. There would be an Imperial budget, which would be submitted each year to the Imperial Parliament with the Irish

sitting in it. Each country would contribute its quota according to population and property. If more were required, the proportions would be maintained. Each island would raise its quota as it best pleased.

2. The Government of Ireland—a Viceroy, a Privy Council, a Representative Assembly, Ministers.

(1) The Viceroy—a member of the Royal family, with a salary of £25,000 per annum.

(2) The Privy Council.—The present Privy Council consists of about fifty individuals, all of them anti-Nationalists, and some of them virulently so. The Council would have to be reorganised. This might be done by nominating 100 new Councillors, men of moderate views, but who would frankly accept the arrangement and endeavour to give practical effect to it. The Council would gradually be increased by the admission of the Irish Ministers.

(3) House of Representatives.—Its members would be elected as with us according to population. As a concession, however, it would be agreed that one-fourth of the members might be nominated, either during two Parliaments or for five years.

(4) Ministers.—They would be selected from the Parliamentary majority as with us. The Viceroy would call upon the leader of the majority to form a Cabinet. He would, however, retain the constitutional right of the Queen to dissolve.

3. The Veto.—This would be reserved to the Viceroy, with the consent of his Privy Council. Of one thing I am absolutely certain. It is that no arrangement is possible which would give the veto to the Imperial Parliament. The Irish object to this, because they consider that it would convert their assembly into a mere debating Society. We—although we seem just now enamoured with it—should soon find that all legislation in England would soon be brought again to a standstill, as we should be perpetually debating Irish bills. The Irish would also object to the Queen exercising the veto by the advice of her Council, for, practically, this would mean the veto of those representing the majority in the English Parliament. The Privy Council is, unfortunately, historically odious in Ireland. But were it recast, it is probable that the Irish would not object to the Veto which I have suggested.

4. Protection of Minorities.—They would already be protected by the veto, by the nominated members and by the Orangemen, who would return a considerable contingent; but the Irish would go even further than this.

(1) No contract existing or entered into could be set aside by Irish legislation. In the event of any one feeling himself aggrieved in this matter, he might appeal to the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords.

(2) Any Landlord would have the right to insist upon his land being bought by the Irish state on the estimate of its value, by the Land Judges, due consideration being taken of tenants' improvements.

5. The Army in Ireland and the Fortresses would be under the orders of the Imperial Ministry, much as is the case in the United States of America.

I am far from saying that the Irish, if left to draw up the settlement, would insert these conditions. Many of them savour of tutelage and distrust. But I am pretty certain that, although in discussion they might claim more, they would, if they could not get more, accept this scheme with an honest intention to make it workable. Less they would not accept, and for a very good reason. If their leaders are to be responsible for the peace, tranquillity, and prosperity of Ireland, they must have full powers to act, and the scheme of Government must in the main be acceptable to the majority of the governed.

At present we have arrived at a Parliamentary deadlock. No measure dealing with Ireland can be passed in the existing House of Commons without the aid of the Irish contingent. If a Coalition Government were to succeed in passing, either in this Parliament or a subsequent Parliament, a half-hearted measure, the Irish would decline to accept it. They would simply refuse to act on it, and thus confusion would become worse confounded. Experience has proved that any proposal not to count on the Irish vote is outside the area of practical politics. Experience has also shown that the rival political parties will not subordinate their differences to any anti-Irish policy. Such schemes are like the kiss of peace of the French Assembly during the French Revolution. They sound all very well but last about half an hour.

We have then to decide whether we will try the experiment of federalisation under the restrictions for the unity of the Empire, and the protection of the minority in Ireland such as I have roughly indicated; or whether we will embark in a career of what practically amounts to war between the two islands.

Many Conservatives are excellent citizens, others are party men. The latter would probably not object to the latter alternative. It would unquestionably have the effect of the French wars in the days of George III. They, I fully admit, would be better able to carry out a system of repression than the Radicals. They therefore would in the main hold office. Domestic reforms would be neglected, the Radical chariot would stand still. You, Sir, I apprehend, are not a Radical, and though you may not be influenced by this arrest of the chariot, you would not regret the *propter hoc*. But it ought to lead any Radical to pause and reflect.

I did not show myself a fanatical worshipper of Mr. Gladstone during the last Parliament, in fact I must have voted against him as often as I voted for him. In my address to my constituents I said that I should raise my voice against any Administration, no matter what it be called, that lags on the path of progress or that falls into error. My constituents have been good enough to leave it to me to decide what is lagging and what is error. If the Conservatives will at once bring in a Bill dealing with Ireland in the manner I have indicated they shall have my vote as far as that Bill is concerned. But I gather that they have determined to oppose a *non possumus* to all such demands and not to go beyond including Irish in any general scheme for local Government in both islands.

I turn therefore to Mr. Gladstone. His public utterances lead me to believe that he is prepared to sacrifice his well-earned ease, and to endeavour to settle the question in a manner satisfactory to us and to the Irish. His experience is vast, his patriotism is undoubted, his tactical skill is unrivalled. I would suggest therefore that we should give him full powers to treat for us with the Irish, and that we should support him in any arrangement which meets with his sanction. The Irish have always had a

sneaking affection for him; they will recognise that he has to count with English public opinion, and they will concede far more to him than to any other negotiator that we might select. I have seen that Lord Hartington and Mr. Forster have pronounced against Home Rule, and that the former is negotiating with Mr. Goschen. Lord Hartington generally pronounces against a measure as a preliminary to accepting it; I do not therefore ascribe much importance to his declaration. Mr. Forster, during the last Parliament, distinguished himself by uttering, in season and out of season, gibes and sarcasms against his former colleagues. Mr. Goschen, a man of great ability and honesty, could not find one English Liberal Constituency to return him, and sits in Parliament by the good favour of the Edinburgh Conservatives. With all respect therefore to the two gentlemen, I hardly think that the Liberals will accept a policy from them. If we are to judge by what happened in the last Parliament they have no followers. . . . Let Mr. Gladstone then boldly declare himself for a well considered measure of Home Rule. . . .

H. Labouchere.[1]

To the Editor of the *Times*.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Dec. 26, 1885.

My dear Chamberlain,—Hawarden writes: . . .[2]

This is rather my plan—commerce would fall within the province of Imperial matters—religion, too, might; taxation is a little more difficult, for it would require much definition.[3]

[1] An old Radical M. P. writes criticising this letter: "Mr. Labouchere has never been regarded by us as a Radical at all, but as a Separatist, and we have always profoundly distrusted his advice upon the few occasions on which it was possible to regard it as serious."—*Times*, Jan. 4, 1886.

[2] Mr. Labouchere here quotes a letter he had received from Mr. Herbert Gladstone, stating Mr. Gladstone's determination not to formulate any scheme which might be taken as a bribe for Irish support, nor to shift from his position, before the Government had spoken, or the Irish party had, in public, terminated their alliance and put the Tories in a minority of 250 to 330.

[3] Mr. Gladstone's idea of a veto was that it might be exercised by the

Will the Irish trust Mr. Gladstone, and go with the Liberals on general assurances? They may, and they may not; they are very suspicious. Were I they, I should, and then upset him if he dodged later on.

Anyhow, I think that we may take it that Mr. Gladstone is determined to have a try at Irish legislation if he gets the chance, and the fact that the Irish can at any time stop him in his career will lead him to go great lengths.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Labouchere

2 CONNAUGHT PLACE, W., Dec. 26, 1885.

DEAR LABOUCHERE,—You have definitely captured the G. O. M. and I wish you joy of him. He has written another letter to A. Balfour, intimating, I understand, without overmuch qualification, that if Government do not take up Home Rule he will.

It is no use your writing to Lord Salisbury. The Prime Minister cannot disclose the intentions of the Government except in the ordinary course when Parliament meets.

I shall look forward to Monday's *Times*.—Yours ever,

RANDOLPH S. C.

I think Joe had much better join us. He is the only man on your side who combines ability with common sense.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

BIRMINGHAM, Dec. 26, 1885.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—The G. O. M. is sulking in his tent. No one can get a word from him—he has not replied to letters from Hartington, Rosebery, and myself.

Further consideration convinces me that no scheme on the lines of Rosebery's proposal is worth attention.

There is only one way of giving *bona fide* Home Rule, which is the adoption of the American Constitution:

Crown on ordinary matters on the advice of an Irish Minister, but, on certain questions, *e. g.* religion or commerce, perhaps taxation, by the Imperial Ministry.

1. Separate legislation for England, Scotland, Wales, and possibly Ulster. The three other Irish Provinces might combine.

2. Imperial legislation at Westminster for foreign and Colonial affairs, Army, Navy, Post Office, and Customs.

3. A Supreme Court to arbitrate on respective limits of authority.

Of course the House of Lords would go. I do not suppose the five Legislations could stand a second Chamber apiece.

Each would have its own Ministry responsible to itself.

There is a scheme for you. It is the only one which is compatible with any sort of Imperial unity, and once established it might work without friction.

Radicals would have no particular reason to object to it, and if Mr. Gladstone is ready to propose it—well and good!

But I am sick of the vague generalities of John Morley and the *Daily News*, and I am not going to swallow Separation with my eyes shut. Let us know what you are doing.

The best thing for us all is to keep the Tories in a little longer. Let them bear the first brunt of the situation created by the state of Ireland and the disappointment of the Nationalists. But how the devil is this to be managed? If the Irishmen choose they can turn the Government out at any moment. Can you not persuade them that it is clearly to their interest to keep them in for one session—while Mr. Gladstone is preparing public opinions?—Yours very truly,

J. Chamberlain.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

Highbury, Birmingham, Dec. 27, 1885.

My dear Labouchere,—I thought the scheme alleged to have been submitted to the Queen was one of recent date.

If the rumour refers only to the time of the late Government, there is not much in it. Mr. Gladstone had no scheme then—only the vaguest ideas as to the necessity of doing something.

It is pretty evident that whatever else he may do to "crown his career" he will break up the Liberal party.

His proposal about veto is a transparent fraud. It could not last as an effective control for a single Parliament. I wish

some one would start the idea of a Federal Constitution like the United States. I do not believe people are prepared for this solution yet, but it is the only possible form of Home Rule. It is that or nothing.

In my opinion Mr. Gladstone cannot carry his or any other scheme just now, and if the Irishmen force the pace the only result will be a dissolution and the Tories in a working majority.

Let them refuse to put the Tories out just yet unless Mr. Gladstone publicly declares himself. If they were to put the Tories out to-morrow, and then turn on the Liberals in a month, they would secure only a strong Coalition both in the House and the country for resistance to all Irish claims.

I believe the true policy for every one except Mr. Gladstone is to "wait and see."—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Dec. 28, 1885.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—If I might venture to criticise—you assume that the Conservatives and the Irish would both act as you wish. Neither would. The Conservatives are sharp enough to decline to retain power in order to be discredited warming-pans, and the Irish must demonstrate, now that they have carried the country.

Writing to Hawarden, I have hinted at your views, and asked whether a below the gangway amendment would be accepted, stating generally that the Irish question must be dealt with. If the G. O. M. and if you were to vote for this, we should still be beaten. The party would not have pledged itself to it as a party; the Irish would be satisfied, and if on some issue in a month or two we had an election, we should get the Irish vote.

I should say myself that it would be far better not to have the Irish at Westminster at all; this would meet the conundrum of an Imperial and an English Ministry. As a statistical fact, Ireland does not now contribute much more than the cost of her civil Government to the Imperial Exchequer. Let her contribute nothing, or some fixed sum for armaments (which she probably

would not pay). She would be like the Dominion. We should hold the country through the army and the fortresses, and if she tried to separate, we should suspend the Constitution. But as a matter of fact, she would not try. The Irish idea of patriotism is to serve the country at a good salary, and to get places for cousins, etc. You would see that Irish politics would become a perpetual vestry fight for the spoil.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Dec. 30, 1885.

My dear Chamberlain,—This is the last from Hawarden, which I transmit to Healy. The "channel" is in reply to a letter from Healy saying that if Mr. Gladstone prefers other channels, he (Healy) must take leave to withdraw. It is all very well, but Parnell will not be such a fool as to show his hand for the benefit of Mr. Gladstone. . . .[1]

Mr. T. M. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

Dublin, Dec. 30, 1885.

My dear L.,—I have been in the country holidaying. The statistics you want I think could be got from Col. Nolan's return, which alas shows that you profit £3,000,000 per annum out of us. I speak from memory. Go to Smith in the House of Commons' Library, and ask him to find it out for you. He can get you this and any other statistical facts you need. But some thirty years ago your people dropped showing a separate Irish account and bulked the whole thing in order to diddle us, and

[1] Mr. Labouchere here quotes in full a letter from Mr. Herbert Gladstone to himself, stating that, if communications have to take place with the Irish party, only one channel will be recognized, viz. Parnell. But he adds he does not think there is any chance of bringing their party to the scratch before Parliament meets, because of the insufficiency of the knowledge they possess to enable them to decide on any action, before the Address debate is actually in progress. He also points out how impossible it would be for Mr. Gladstone to adopt Mr. Chamberlain's policy of waiting, and adds that if the Liberal Party chooses to break up over an Irish Parliament it cannot be helped.

therefore it is not easy to reckon the figures out. O'Neill Daunt, however, can supply everything you can't get elsewhere. I think Randolph must have pulled the longbow rather taut to you in every way. I don't believe anything he has been saying. As to Chamberlain he must be crazy to write that way to Morley. Give the G. O. M. power and he could form a Cabinet in a week minus Joe, and the Gates of Birmingham should not prevail against it (it is "Hell" in the original). Your letter ought to do much good. You greatly improved it. It has been quoted into all the Irish papers and commented on. I am glad it appeared, but of course, I know nothing of the genesis. I agree with you about representation in the Imperial Parliament. Your people seem to shy at it, and it would be better for us not to have it, unless your side insists. Still there will be many Irishmen loath to surrender all representation, but they cannot have everything. I don't think Fottrell can physic Chamberlain's disease. He 's going to be a Mugwump. I wish him joy of the profession. His chance was to be first Lieutenant to the G. O. M. *cum jure suc*, and he is going to degenerate into a kind of small Forster species of Sorehead. I note what you say about our papers. Like Brer Rabbit we ought to "lay low" just now. Small wonder if Gladstone should be intimidated into minimising coercion. The Heathen rage very furiously against him. I mistrust Grosvenor's influence on Hawarden. If the old man was ten years younger, I 'd be for keeping in the Tories till we got County Boards out of them in order to chasten your party in the cold winds of opposition. Our people won't have any fraud of a Bill made for the Whigs to swallow. We shall be reasonable, but so must your party. We can wait, for we are used to it. Your party leaders represent personal ambition, and are in more of a hurry.—Faithfully yours,

T. M. Healy.

Mr. T. M. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

Dublin, Dec. 31, 1885.

My dear L.,—I return H. Gladstone's letter which I regard as most important. I am very glad to think Gladstone is not being intimidated out of his position by the pitiless storm beating

upon him. I agree that nothing satisfactory can be done until the House meets, and we shall then have a week before the Address is read, and our party will have met, and we shall know its mind, while personal communications will have become possible amongst the Liberal leaders also. I think Chamberlain is ruining himself. If Gladstone sticks to his text he can easily form a Cabinet without him or the Mugwumps, and then where will they be? Trevelyan's speech to-day is very bad too, but they are all ciphers until Gladstone puts his one before their noughts.

I have your letters safely and will return all your former enclosures to-night. I am not writing this from my house or I 'd send them with this. I have kept copies of nothing and burn your letters, as the police could always find a pretext here to walk in on you and read your *billets-doux*.—Faithfully yours,

T. M. Healy.

CHAPTER XII

THE SPLIT IN THE LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Jan. 1, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—No, I do not think that he (Mr. Gladstone) is hedging; from his personal standpoint, he knows that his only chance of coming in is to get over the Irish, and then to get over his own party. Waiting games may suit others, but he cannot wait, and already considers that he has been out for very long. He thought so a week after Salisbury came in, and at once commenced with the Irish.

This, I should imagine, is his game. On the Address, he will endeavour to put the Tories in a minority, with or without the Irish. He then expects to be called upon to form a Government. He will at once begin to enter privately into terms with the Irish. These terms will be much the same sort of thing as I wrote in the *Times*, or non-appearance at all in the Imperial Parliament, after the manner of Canada. If he cannot make terms, it may be that his desire for office will lead him to come in, but if he is to be believed, he will not. What will then be the position? He cannot well dissolve, so there must inevitably be a Palmerston-Hartington Government, whilst the Radicals would be split up, some going for the Irish, others against. This, it seems to me, means the destruction of the Radical Party for many a year. Mr. Gladstone knows that he is too big an individuality to be the head of a Coalition Government, moreover he has burnt his ships.

Suppose, on the other hand, the Conservatives dissolve at once, after Mr. Gladstone has pronounced in favour of Home

Rule. On what cry should we go to the country, if not on Home Rule? Evidently those opposed to it would give the preference to the Conservatives, for they one and all would have put their foot down, whilst we should be tainted with the unholy thing, even if we had made a Jonah of Mr. Gladstone. So long as the Irish question is not settled, the Tories must have the pull in the country, and the Radicals must remain discredited and disunited.

This being so, is it not worth while to take the other course? It is by no means certain that we should be beaten at an election. Mr. Gladstone is still a power. The Irish have votes which would turn several places. The electors may be divided into people who think about the question of Ireland, and those who don't. For the latter a "cow" might be invented, whilst many of the former would say that as one English party has gone for Home Rule, it must come, and if so as speedily as possible.

The real enemies of the Radicals are the Whigs, and they are essentially your enemies. It is a mistake to undervalue them. They have always managed to jockey the Radicals. They hang together; they have, through Grosvenor, the machine; they dominate in Clubs and in the formation of Cabinets. They may ally themselves with you *re* Ireland, but this will be for their benefit, not yours. Nothing would give them greater pleasure than to betray you with a kiss, for you are their permanent bogey. Once you are out of the way, and the sheep of Panurge, *i. e.*, the vast majority of the Liberal M. P.s, would be boxed up in their fold. At every election we should have shilly-shally talk, very vague and apparently meaning much, followed by half-hearted measures.

All this is why I still hold that the Radical game is to go with Mr. Gladstone on Irish matters, and to use him in order to shunt them and, if possible, the Whigs—not that this course is not full of danger, but that it seems to me to present less danger than any other.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

Highbury, Moor Green,
Birmingham, Jan. 3, 1886.

My dear Labouchere,—The more I look at the thing, the less I like it. Whatever we do we shall be smashed for a cer-

tainty. The question is whether it is better to be smashed with Mr. Gladstone and the Parnellites or without them.

I believe the anti-Irish feeling is very strong with our best friends—the respectable artisans and the non-Conformists.

One thing I am clear about. If we are to give way it must be by getting rid of Ireland altogether, and by some such scheme as this.

Call Ireland a protected state. England's responsibility to be confined exclusively to protecting the country against foreign aggression.

England's authority to be confined exclusively to the measures necessary to secure that Ireland shall not be a *point d'appui* for a foreign country.

The financial question to be settled by a fixed annual payment to cover:

1. Ireland's share of the Debt.
2. A sinking fund to extinguish it in fifty years.
3. The cost of the military garrison.

Query: Should we hold the customs till this Debt is extinguished, or find some other security for payment?

In order to gild the pill for the English sympathisers with Protestant and landowning minorities:

Ireland to be endowed with a Constitution—the elements to be:

1. A Governor with power to dissolve Parliament—no veto.
2. A Senate, probably elected but with some qualifications to secure a moderately Conservative Assembly.
3. A House of Commons.

To meet the prejudices of English manufacturers and workmen, a Commercial treaty pledging Ireland not to impose duties on English manufactures. (Bounties might be left open.)

In this case Ireland could have no foreign relations. It is impossible to allow her to communicate direct any more than Australia and Canada. But this was a great source of complaint by Irish patriots in the time of Grattan's Parliament.

The difficulties of any plan are almost insurmountable, but the worst of all plans would be one which kept the Irishmen at Westminster while they had their own Parliament in Dublin.

I end as I began. We shall be smashed because the country is not prepared for Home Rule.—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Jan. 4, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I think your scheme an excellent one; only Ireland is so wretchedly poor a country, that it will not pay its contribution; that, however, is a detail.

I am perfectly certain that Mr. Gladstone is determined to go on, and that any idea of a Whig cum Radical demonstration to induce him to keep quiet will not avail. Rosebery writes, "He is boiling over with the subject," and you know how, when once an idea gets hold of his mind, it ferments; as Hawarden said in a recent letter, he is determined to stand or fall by it.

I suspect that this scheme is passing through his ingenuous mind. To get in by the Irish vote, then to ask the Conservatives to consult with him as to a plan. The Irish, however, are quite cute enough not to help him in, until, one way or another, they are secured against this.

I have just received this from Churchill:

> "The Queen's Speech will be delivered on the 21st. No mention of Home Rule. What a blessing it would be if we could get rid of the Whigs and the Irish at one coup. But I am afraid that this will be impossible, and that the former as usual will knock under."

—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to the "Times" (Extract)

REFORM CLUB, Jan. 2, 1886.

You, sir, possibly have not been brought closely in contact with the Irish leaders. I have; and more practical, sensible, I may indeed say, more moderate men, when not under the influence of temporary excitement, I never came across. . . . I have indeed been greatly struck with their largeness and broadness of view, which contrasts advantageously with our supercilious mode of treating political opponents who have not the advantage of

being Anglo-Saxons, our insularity, and our want of facility to grasp new ideas, or to realise the necessity of adapting ourselves to circumstances, as Bunsen—one of our great admirers—said, what most struck him during his residence here was "the deficiency of the method of handling ideas in this blessed island."—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.[1]

To the Editor of the *Times*.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Labouchere

INDIA OFFICE, Jan. 7, 1886.

DEAR LABOUCHERE,—I should be delighted to dine with you on the 12th or 15th, if that would be convenient and agreeable to you. I think Joe is quite right to walk warily. After all, if the G. O. M. goes a mucker it may be a good thing for everybody. He has always disturbed the equilibrium of parties and done no good to any one except himself. However, you will probably think me prejudiced.—Yours ever,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Jan. 7, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Churchill will come on the 15th if that suits you. Is there any other Conservative or Liberal you would like?

I suspect that Mr. Gladstone will not give the necessary pledges to the Irish. They have an idea that he might get in by their votes, and then try to make terms with the Conservatives, and bring in a milk and water measure. He talks of faith in him. Singularly enough they have not that amount which they ought to have.

There is also the possibility that they will take a bird in the hand from the Conservatives—in the form of some local county measure, which would strengthen them in Ireland, and which would give them leverage.

If this be so, how about a resolution in their favour—some-

[1] The *Times*, January 4, 1886.

what vague—which would win them over to us in case of an election, and which would not be carried?—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. T. M. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

DUBLIN, Jan. 7, 1886.

MY DEAR L.,—I am afraid I badly repay all your letters. I greatly fear that Chamberlain's tone shows that even if he accepts the proposals in principle, he will help the Whigs to make Mr. Gladstone minimise them, and thus they may prove inacceptable to Ireland. Then it will be the Land Act misery over again, or rather your party would not be let in by us to pass a maimed measure, and so the Tories would reap the profit of our dissensions. *Beati possidentes!* However, I think when your men get blooded by a few skirmishes with the Tories, they will be willing enough to patch things up to turn them out. With regard to Morley's point about the Veto, I recognise that the bigger powers we get the more natural would be your desire for some guarantee against their abuse—the better the Parliament, the more effective the Veto. As the scientist would say, you want it increased according to the square of the power. A Governor-General, I think, would meet this, and, for my part, I think it would capture or render quiescent a lot of the loyalists if he were a prince. A few Royal levees and some judicious jobs would probably bring most of these gentry round in a short time.

Your letters have been admirable, and I am sure have done good, though none of us could write to the *Times* or acknowledge it in any way. Moreover, except through extracts in the *Express*, none of us see it here. A single copy of any newspaper from across the Channel does not enter the office of *United Ireland!* However, as we are not your rulers this is no crime.

The usual stuff I see is being talked about Home Rule leading to separation, and how the American-Irish would not accept the settlement, nor the Fenians. The fellow who writes as "an old Fenian" in the *St. James' Gazette*, extracts from which I have seen, is Dick Piggott, late of the *Irishman* newspaper, who swindled

every Fenian Fund he could milk, and whom the boys would not touch with the tongs. I undertake to say that if a suitable Home Rule scheme be proposed, though Parnell said he could offer no guarantees, that we could call a National Convention to ratify it, and therefore could treat as a traitor every one who afterwards opposed it, or did not loyally abide thereby. Moreover, terrible as are the American-Irish in English eyes, I believe —and I have visited and spoken at every big city from New York to San Francisco, and from Galveston on the Mexican Gulf to Montreal in Canada—that we could summon a representative Convention in Chicago, including the Clan na Gael, the ancient Order, and the Rossa crowd which would endorse the settlement and thereby effectually dry up the well-springs of revolutionary agitation. But to do this we must get no sham vestry, but an assembly that would gratify the national pride of the Celtic race. Our people in America will only be too glad to be allowed to mind their own business, and many of the wealthy among them will come back and settle down here, investing their capital and teaching the people the industries they have learnt abroad. The mass of them are as Conservative as any in the world, and when I told a crowded meeting the night of the Chicago Convention in 1881—referring to wild advice that had been offered—"that the Irish leaders were no more to be bought by American dollars than by English gold," the sentiment was cheered to the echo and was mutilated accordingly in the report of the *Irish World*.

However, this is running a long way ahead of events, and this idea of mine is not one that I have yet broached to my colleagues.

I expect to be over on Tuesday, but hope to be allowed to run back then till the 21st, as I suppose we shall have nothing to do in the interval. I don't suppose we shall make up our minds as to whether we shall move an amendment to the Address, till after we hear it read. Even then this, I presume, would depend as to whether a *modus vivendi* with you was arrived at, for if the Tories are in earnest with their threat to dissolve, the best tactics would be to have no Irish Debate and to cook their goose on a side issue—Egypt, Burmah, or what-not.—Truly yours,

T. M. Healy.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

HIGHBURY, MOOR GREEN,
BIRMINGHAM, Jan. 8, 1886.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—The 15th will suit me. Many thanks. I fancy Randolph Churchill will be more talkative if we are alone, unless you know any one whom he likes to meet. I leave it entirely in your hands.

Mr. Gladstone has asked me to meet him on Tuesday. Perhaps he may be explicit, but I am not sanguine.

If the Irish are ready to give the Tories a chance, by all means let us wait and see results.

I could not support any resolution at present. If it were vague, the Irish would not thank us—if it were definite, I doubt if it would be good policy to vote with it.

We are sure to have an opportunity on the Local Government Bill—if we desire to take advantage of it.—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Jan. 9, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I had a letter from Healy yesterday. So far as I understand the matter, things are in this position.

Mr. Gladstone is in his tent. He will do nothing until the Address. He then, I think, inclines to an understanding with the Irish, for this is a *sine qua non* of his coming in.

Healy says that the Irish will decide nothing until the Address. They will not aid in turning out the Tories unless there is a specific understanding as to what Mr. Gladstone's Bill is to be. If such arrangement be satisfactory, they will agree to vote them out on Burmah, Egypt, or anything else, so as to render it difficult for the Tories to dissolve. They perceive the difficulties of Mr. Gladstone's position and are just now in a yielding mood, but beyond a certain point they cannot go, as their own people would turn against them.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Jan. 12, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—I have just got a long letter from Herbert Gladstone. So far as I can make out, Mr. Gladstone has in reality abandoned none of his projects. But he is cornered by the fact that the Irish will not aid him to get in without very definite assurances.

Healy writes to say that he will be here on Thursday, and that nothing has been decided as to the course of the Irish. He suggests—if some agreement can be come to—saying not one word on Home Rule, but turning the Government out upon a bye issue, Egypt, Burmah, or anything. I have written to ask whether the following plan would be assented to:

(1) Turn out Government on bye issue. (2) Have some sort of temporary scheme for governing Ireland. (3) Appoint some sort of dilatory Commission. (4) Bring in Bill next year. I have explained that this would only be possible if Mr. Gladstone could, in some way or other, make it clear to the Irish what the Bill is to be, and also that he would stand or fall on it.

This would give time to educate public opinion, and to have good Bills on English subjects, whilst it would render it impossible for the Conservatives to dissolve.

I don't know whether I could get the Irish to assent—supposing that Mr. Gladstone does—but I should be sanguine of doing so. They have now so arranged their party that practically Healy, O'Brien, Harrington, and Parnell can do precisely what they like. Parnell I put last, because he will agree to the decisions of the other three.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

P. S.—I write this, because I shall not be able to explain it to you this evening before Randolph Churchill.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Jan. 15, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—I should have been delighted to

dine with you on the 31st, but I have already asked some people to dine with me on that day.

Harcourt favoured me during an hour yesterday with his views. They are vague and misty. He has got it into his head that the Government mean a Coercion Bill. If they are wise, I should think that they would bring one in, and thus split up the Liberals at once.

Mr. Gladstone is evidently meditating some coup on his own account, and to retire in a blaze of Irish fire-works. He does not want to wait, but if he acts, he holds that he must act at once. He is by no means in a good humour with his late colleagues.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

Dublin, Jan. 15, 1886.

My dear Mr. L.,—Herbert Gladstone is totally wrong about me. I neither saw nor heard from nor communicated with Churchill or any member of the Government since the House rose—I except the Irish law officers whom I meet daily in Court, but whom I never exchange a word with on politics. I am now just of the same opinion I always held, but I don't see what we can do till your party move. It would play the devil with us were we to put the Liberals into office and then have them to turn round on us, by proposing a settlement we could not accept. We cannot buy a pig in a poke. You may say we could turn them out at a minute's notice. That seems very easy on paper by counting parties, but if we are going to play this game successfully the fewer ministries we turn out the better, as any naked exhibition of our power in a gratuitous way would be sure to get you a majority if you dissolved on that issue. No, we prefer instead of having to put you out, not to let you get in, until there 's a straightforward arrangement made. At least this is what seems to me to be commonsense. I know nothing of the Tory plans. Of course, if they are fools enough to play your hand by proposing coercion our hands may be forced—I only write on the assumption that they have sense. What I say is let Mr. Gladstone satisfy Parnell and the whole thing is settled.

Was it from Grosvenor's experience and anecdotes of the Irish party that the Duke of Westminster called us *debauchees?* Were we too lax in our attendance on Parliament to please Lord Richard —prowling round St. John's Wood, when we ought to have been braking his coach? So we must please our fastidious censors by arranging that the new party will sit up of nights in the House, instead of sporting about town as His Grace suggests the old one did. Shall be over on Thursday.

T. M. Healy.

Mr. Healy to Mr. Labouchere

Dublin, Jan. 17, 1886.

My dear L.,—I don't think I could say anything fresh until Thursday, when I shall go fully into matters with you. I quite feel the difficulties of Mr. Gladstone's position and think our party fully appreciate them, and would even strain points to obviate them, if this can well be done by men in our straits. However, I would point out that on his side we have had nothing but a repudiation of the principles attributed to him by the "Revelations," and this, *plus* good intentions, is not sufficient ground for eighty-six men to consult and decide on. If no communication is made to Parnell, as I think it ought to be, for our meeting, we shall probably let things drift and do nothing. I would have preferred all along not to have been the repository of any views held by your Leaders, lest it might be supposed I was trenching on the prerogatives of Parnell's position, and now I think the time has come—if he is to be approached at all for some communication to reach him otherwise than through me. If I can be shown any honourable basis, on which we could vote your party into power, I shall rejoice and will press my views strongly on our men.—Faithfully yours,

T. M. Healy.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Jan. 22, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—I send this to you by hand, be-

cause if you are inclined to go on with the plan you suggested, it will be necessary to act.

Parnell is quite ready—without prejudice—that is to say, he says that he does not absolutely assent, but thinks that he will, which you know, with him—who is more hesitating than Fabius—means that he will. His lieutenants agree—although he does not know this.

But he says that, admitting that Mr. Gladstone can give no pledges, he must know two things:

1. That Mr. Gladstone, if called upon by the Queen to form a Government, will form one, *i. e.*, if Goschen, Hartington, etc., decline to join, that he will not throw up the sponge, for, with considerable point, he says that he prefers the Conservatives to a Hartington Government, supported by the Moderate Liberals and Conservatives, and you as a Radical. Such a Government he might not be able to turn out, and it might remain master of the situation.

2. He wants an understanding that if Mr. Gladstone comes in he will act on his speech, and at once bring in his scheme for the Government of Ireland.

I saw Herbert Gladstone, and he is to explain these two demands to his father.

Herbert Gladstone says that his father would take office without Hartington, but that his main difficulty is the Peers. He hopes that he will be able to get over this difficulty very soon.

I have replied that at any moment the Irish may break out, and that if once we get to Procedure we shall all fall to pieces, and that the determination of the Irish to fight against Procedure will very soon make us too.

I begged J. Collings to put off his amendment, and told him that perhaps I might get him some votes. Randolph Churchill tried to bring the general debate to an end last night, but this we stopped, and Sexton moved the adjournment.

Grosvenor asked me how long the debate would last? I said the Irish meant to keep it up. He said that he did not want them to. I said that they were not asking him whether he did or not, but that he was asking me now long it would last. He told me that he would prevent the G. O. M. ever going for Home Rule, and then spoke about the Party. He said, "You or *Truth*

are making a great mistake. You assume that the Radicals constitute the majority of the Liberal Party, but really the Whigs do." I asked him what would happen if the G. O. M. were to retire; he replied, a Whig Administration under Hartington with you—that you and the Radicals would soon perceive that you were not masters of the situation, etc.

I, of course, did not tell him about Collings's amendment, but it will be very difficult to get him to whip for it, and you will have to put your foot down about it. Parnell agrees, if they are to be bought off, that the Irish shall appear not to take much interest in the matter, but to vote up before the Whigs know what is to occur.

Parnell is more than reasonable. In his present mood, he is all for a fair scheme. His two *sine qua nons* are, that there should be an Assembly called a Parliament for local matters, and that he should have the Police. He says that it would be absolutely impossible for him to keep down the Fenians without this, and that he is fully determined not to accept the responsibility. About the veto, etc., he will make concessions, and give any guarantees that are required.

He made a most conciliatory speech last night. Before making it he said, "There shall not be one word in it to which any one can object." He is very anxious to know about your feeling on the matter of Mr. Gladstone's plans.

With regard to Ireland, he says that the people really cannot pay their rents in some places, and that he is certain that if nothing be done there will be rows in a few weeks. But he is doing all that he can to keep things quiet, and next week he will dissolve some of the most bumptious of the Local Branch Leagues.

I told Herbert Gladstone that you had suggested to me the Collings amendment.[1] Could you not see Mr. Gladstone and push the matter? I also told Herbert Gladstone that Grosvenor was not to be trusted.

I shall, I suppose, see you in the House this afternoon. Never shall we have a better chance, but if we do not use our chances, they will disappear.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

[1] It was upon this Amendment that Lord Salisbury's Government was defeated.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S. W., Feb. 15, 1886.[1]

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,— . . . As regards out future policy I can say nothing at present, but I think that a closer inspection of the difficulties in the way has brought Mr. Gladstone nearer to me than he was when he first came to London. If Parnell is impracticable my hope is that we may all agree to give way to the Tories and let them do the coercion which will then be necessary. They will be supported for this purpose by a clear majority in the country and probably in the House. As for passing Home Rule resolutions at the present time, I utterly disbelieve in its possibility.—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain[2]

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, March 31, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—There would be much joy in the Radical heaven if things could be hit off with you, and they would all be ready to put Elijah's mantle on you if they could come to some agreement as to this damned Irish question.

The feeling is, I think, this: they are in favour of Home Rule, and do not particularly care about details, provided that the scheme settles the matter. They do not love the Irish, but hate them, and would give them Home Rule on the Gladstone or Canada pattern to get rid of them. Home Rule, therefore, whatever the Whigs may say, will be carried. They are dead against any employment of English credit for the Irish landlords or Irish tenants. This—whatever the detail of Mr. Gladstone's plan may be—will be lost.

I rather suspect that the revered G. O. M. is playing a game; he is bound to Spencer, therefore he is to bring in his Land Bill. But, if it meets with disapproval, is it likely that he will throw

[1] The lull in Mr. Labouchere's correspondence is accounted for by the fact that Lord Salisbury's Government, finding itself in a minority of 79 on the early morning of January 27, resigned, and, on February 26, Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister for the third time. Mr. Chamberlain became President of the Local Government Board.

[2] Mr. Chamberlain had resigned his post in the Cabinet on March 16.

up the Home Rule sponge for the sake of Spencer and the Irish landlords? Will he not rather say that it is a detail of a great project, and not an essential one?

Now, just see what would be the position if we could act with you on these lines? The Whigs would be cleared out. If Gladstone is beaten, we would soon upset a Hartington cum Conservative Government. We might have grandiose revolutions—giving cows to agriculturists, and free breakfast tables to artisans. We should be against Tories, Whigs, and Lords. With you to the front we should win at an election, or if not at once, later on. There never was such an opportunity to establish a Radical party, and to carry all before it. Is it worth while wrecking this beautiful future, for the sake of some minor details about Irish Government? You may depend upon it, that the Irish, if not granted Gladstone's Home Rule, will never assent to anything else. Coercion would follow, and this would give power to the Tory Whigs for years. For my part, I would coerce the Irish, grant them Home Rule, or do anything with them, in order to make the Radical programme possible. Ireland is but a pawn in the game. If they make fools of themselves when left to themselves, it would be easy to treat them as the North did the South, rule by the sword, and suppress all representation. —Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

REFORM CLUB, April 7, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Any number of Radicals expressed their hope this afternoon in the House that you would see your way to approve of Mr. Gladstone's amended Bill. They are all most anxious that you should be the Elisha of the aged Elijah, and aid in getting this Irish question out of the way.

I believe that the old Parliamentary Hand means to throw out that, on details, discussion can take place in Committee. The line, I hear, on Excise and Customs is: Do you want the Irish Members? if not, you must give them Excise and Customs; if you do, this is not necessary.

I was asked to sound Parnell a couple of days ago about

annexing Belfast and the adjacent country to England. I did not see him, but I learnt that he is strongly against it. The project is, I think, now abandoned, for the Scotch seem likely to go straight without it, and the Belfast people do not want it.

To the best of my belief the real number that Hartington has got is sixty. We cannot make out about Ponsonby calling on Hartington, unless the Queen is anticipating events, and sounding him about what she must do, if asked to dissolve. Randolph tells me that Lord Salisbury called upon him to settle details about the debate. I doubt whether this is precisely true.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

40 Prince's Gardens, S. W., April 8, 1886.[1]

My dear Labouchere,—Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to come back to the fold. Unfortunately I am told to-day on the highest authority that the scheme to be proposed to-night will not meet the main objections which led to my resignation. I am very sorry, as I was and am in the most conciliatory mood.—Yours very truly,

J. L. Chamberlain.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, April 15, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—Some friends of yours are urging that there should be an interview between you and Mr. Gladstone. They asked me what I thought? I said that it was doubtful whether this would lead to much beyond vague talk by Mr. Gladstone.

You objected to (1) Members being excluded, (2) Magistrates not being appointed by England, (3) Excise and Customs. No 3 is given up. No 1 is an open question, which is practically yielded. There remains, therefore, only No. 2. As regards the two Orders, I presume that Mr. Gladstone alluded to them, when he said that he did not himself deem guarantees necessary.

[1] On April 8 Mr. Gladstone moved the first reading of the Home Rule Bill.

There is no reason therefore why we should not throw them out in Committee, or if they pass, and there is a Radical majority in Parliament later on, reconsider the matter. So the Bill has been remodelled on your pattern.

As regards the Land Bill,[1] I hear that Lord Spencer says that if it is thrown out in the House of Commons, he will not complain. Mr. Gladstone therefore avoids trouble by bringing it in, and as the Conservatives cannot well vote for it, I am sure that we can throw it out on the Second Reading.

Your coming over would ensure the passing of the Irish Government Bill; it would go to the Lords. Then Queen, Lords, and Whigs would be on one side, and the Radicals on the other. Mr. Gladstone must soon come to an end. You would be our leader. The Whigs would be hopelessly bogged. Radicalism would be triumphant. Does not this tempt you? It really does seem such a pity with the promised land before us, that we should wander off into the wilderness, on account of small differences of detail. There is no scheme which the mind of man could contrive that would not be open to criticism. A better one than that of Mr. Gladstone is conceivable, but show me how any body of men would be found to agree upon any other scheme? There is nothing more easy than Constitution making, except criticising the Constitutions made by others, and there always are, and always will be, a number of people to go against any scheme.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S. W., April 17, 1886.

No. 1.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—I really made a great effort last night to come to an arrangement, and whether it is successful or not depends now on Mr. Gladstone's inclination to meet me half way—rather perhaps I should say it depends upon the action of yourself and other Radical members who agree with my views and are in a position to bring sufficient pressure to bear upon the Whigs to make reconciliation a certainty.

[1] Land Bill introduced and the First Reading on April 16.

I am quite convinced, from the information that reaches me, that unless some such reconciliation is effected the Liberal party will be hopelessly divided at the general election.

The majority will very likely go with the party machinery and with Mr. Gladstone, but a sufficient number will stand aloof to make success impossible.

We cannot leave the matter uncertain till after the 2nd reading. I know enough of Parliamentary tactics to be sure that in that case we shall get nothing, but be beaten in detail on every division. All I ask is that Mr. Gladstone should give some sufficient assurance that he will consent—first, to the retention of the Irish representation at Westminster on its present footing according to population, and at the same time the maintenance of Imperial control over Imperial taxation in Ireland; and secondly, that he should be willing to abandon all the so-called safeguards in connection with the Constitution of the new legislative body in Dublin.

You can get this assurance if you like, and the matter is therefore in your hands.—Yours very truly,

J. Chamberlain.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, April 17, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—I made it quite clear and distinct both to Herbert Gladstone and to Arnold Morley what you wanted, after seeing you. Herbert is to tackle his father on the subject. I have no doubt that we can arrange the matter. Arnold Morley would hold that, anyhow, you would vote for the Bill. I said that this was not quite so certain, and that your proposal was a reasonable one. Herbert Gladstone said that his father did not in the least undervalue your support, and considered that your present attitude was paralysing the party outside Parliament. Some friends of yours were getting up a memorandum to Mr. Gladstone about the Bill, asking him to promise this and that. Do pray stop them. If once we get to memorandums we shall have counter ones from the Whigs, and they put Mr. Gladstone in a hole.

Herbert Gladstone says that the real *bona fide* difficulty of his father is, that he cannot devise a scheme. Could you not let

me have one? This would settle this nonsense. How would it be if proxies were allowed in respect to the Irish?—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

P. S.—What day is your meeting at Birmingham?

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S. W., April 17, 1886.

No. 2.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—Since writing you I have received your card. It is necessary that I should say that nothing will induce me to vote for the second reading, unless I get some assurance of Mr. Gladstone's willingness to maintain the Irish representation. I do not think there is any practical difficulty in the way greater than, or as great as, the difficulties already attempted to be overcome in the Bill. I am told that Morley stands in the way of a reconciliation as he considers himself pledged by his Chelmsford speech to the exclusion of the Irish members from Westminster.

As regards the memorandum, I understand that it is only to the Whips for their information, and not for Mr. Gladstone. I think it may safely be allowed to go on. I believe a number of the Whips would be quite willing to sign it and to accept the compromise.

My meeting at Birmingham is on Wednesday. I will try and maintain a conciliatory attitude, but the position becomes increasingly difficult. I am bothered out of my life to attend Radical meetings in different parts of the country. I have already received invitations from Manchester, Rochdale, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Woolwich, and other places.

I need not say that I do not want to start on a campaign unless it is absolutely necessary.—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

POPE'S VILLA, TWICKENHAM, April 19, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I write you a line to catch the post. Herbert Gladstone told me that he had talked with his

father on the matter last Saturday. The difficulty of Mr. Gladstone seems to be this: he has no great objection himself to the Irish Members sitting here. But he does not like to consult his Cabinet, for fear of resignations, and does not like to give a pledge without consulting them. He considers that he has already said a good deal in his speeches to show how open his mind is.

Now, would it not be possible for us all to vote for the Second Reading, and to announce that we shall go for the Members sitting in Committee? It is true that we risk being beaten. But, according to the Whips—and so far as I can make it out they are correct—there is a majority for the Bill on the Second Reading. In the main the Members will vote for the principle of Home Rule on the Second Reading, however opposed they may be to certain details. The estimate is that this majority will be from fifteen to twenty. As a rule, however, doubtfuls gravitate into the party fold, so it possibly will be more. It cannot, however, be sufficiently large to make the Government independent of us in Committee. We shall be the masters of the situation, and Mr. Gladstone will completely bleed to death instead of being murdered by us, for the odds are that the Bill will never come out of Committee.

I venture, therefore, to think that, seeing the difficulties of Mr. Gladstone giving any specific pledge, seeing the tone of Members, and seeing the objections to going against the vast majority of Radicals and with the Whigs, it would be well to rest satisfied, if Mr. Gladstone will distinctly agree to leave the matter an open question. I think that we can get a majority of Radicals both on the "Member" question and on the "Order" question. The course I propose seems to be the best practically.

We have a meeting at the St. James's Hall, on Thursday, at which I am to take the Chair. The Resolution is conceived in the above spirit, and I have already had rows with some of the Members who are to attend, because they say it looks like knocking under to Chamberlain. It assents to Second Reading, but trusts that the measure will be modified in a democratic sense in Committee. This we shall carry.

I do not myself believe in Morley's resignation, nor indeed in Harcourt's. It is possible, however, that the Lord Chancellor will be firm, though I understand that he likes his salary.

Supposing that you voted against the Second Reading with ten followers. This would be a tactical fiasco. If, however, you carried all the Radicals with you—or almost all—in Committee, this would be a tactical success, whilst the Radicals would be delighted with your acting with them on the first, and would act with you on the second. Had we begun sooner, I think that we could have got up a pronouncement against the Bill, if the point were not yielded. But most of the Radicals have now compromised themselves.

I talked to Hartington and some of the Whigs this evening. They seemed to me rather down-hearted. I suspect that they are not getting the support that they anticipated. This is always the case with a big cave.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

POPE'S VILLA, TWICKENHAM, April 19, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Your letters will go to Mr. Gladstone this evening. If he is wise he will make terms about the Members sitting. I hear that he was very much put out about your speech, and no one dared to speak to him before he left for Hawarden.

John Morley is going to speak on Wednesday. He will be conciliatory, and say, "If a plan can be devised, etc."

Mr. Gladstone should ask you for your plan, as he says that he cannot make one.

I don't well see how he can promise to go against the guarantees. He has already said that they are inserted for weaker brethren. They will, if retained, and if we vote against them, keep the Irish on our side.

Don't forget that if you do not get what you want, there is still the Third Reading.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

POPE'S VILLA, TWICKENHAM, April 20, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—You will see our resolution in the *Daily News* of to-day. Do you see your way to write me a little

letter, in reply to a supposed one from me asking you what you think of the resolution and expressing a hope that the Radical party will be united, etc. It would not do if you were to say that you should vote against the Second Reading, but could you not blink this—say something about the principle of the Bill being the principle of justice, and that *in Committee* the Radicals must unite to insist upon the admission of Members and the abrogation of the orders. If you could not absolutely do this, you might leave it vague, allowing some to think that you will vote for the Second Reading and others to think that you will not.

I am writing to Dilke to ask him if he can see his way to write a similar letter.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

HIGHBURY, MOOR GREEN,
BIRMINGHAM, April 21, 1886.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—The Resolution which you send me, and which is to be proposed at your meeting to-morrow night, seems well designed to unite the Radical party. We are all fortunately agreed that the principle of Home Rule in some shape or another must be accepted, and we only differ, if at all, as to the methods by which it is to be carried into effect. For myself, I firmly believe that Home Rule may be conceded in such a form as to join the three Kingdoms more closely together. On the other hand, I fear that the effect of the Bill in its present shape would be to bring about absolute separation at no distant date. I hope the Government may see its way to accept the modifications which Radicals advocate, and if any assurance to this effect is given I shall gladly support the Second Reading in the hope that minor improvements may be effected in it.—I am, yours truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

HIGHBURY, MOOR GREEN,
BIRMINGHAM, April 22, 1886.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—My speech last night will show you

where I am. I cannot say that I am surprised at the desire of the friends of the Government that objectors should accept the Second Reading and reserve their opposition for the Committee stage; but the advice is too transparent and cannot possibly be accepted.

I do not believe there is really the least difficulty in allowing the Irish Members to come to Westminster and there to vote only on questions which are not referred to them at Dublin. John Morley's difficulties are childish and perfectly insignificant as compared with the difficulties which Mr. Gladstone has already surmounted in the preparation of his Bill.

Bradford election shows what will be the end of it all. In spite of the large Irish vote now transferred to the Liberal candidate the majority of 1500 has dwindled to half that number! I am being bullied to attend Radical meetings in all parts of the country, but at present I have replied that I am not willing to undertake anything in the nature of a campaign against Gladstone. At the same time I am pressing all my correspondents to try to bring about an arrangement by mutual concession. I confess I am not very sanguine of success.—Believe me, yours truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

HIGHBURY, MOOR GREEN,
BIRMINGHAM, April 24, 1886.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—I cannot authorise the change you suggest in my letter, which I only wrote as you asked me for it, without much idea that it would be useful.

I think the chance of any reunion is very slight. I certainly could not agree to vote for the second reading without preliminary assurances as to retention of the Irish representation.

I have no doubt that the result of my action will involve temporary unpopularity with the Radical party, but they will probably want my help again at some future time, and will then exhibit as short a memory and as little consistency as they are doing now on the question of Irish Government.

In the meantime the honour of leading a party so uncertain appears to me less clear than it did some months ago.—Believe me, yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Sir Charles Dilke

POPE'S VILLA, TWICKENHAM, April 24, 1886.

MY DEAR DILKE,—Chamberlain sent me a letter for the St. James's Hall meeting, but it came too late. It would not, however, have helped matters, for he sticks to the phrase "the Government accepts." I had a letter from him this morning, much in the same tone, also one from Morley, who says that Chamberlain's speech is an attempt to coerce the Government, and that they won't stand coercion.

I have been trying to get Chamberlain to agree to vote for the Second Reading, on condition that the Government makes the admission of Irish in Parliament a *bona fide* open question, on which the House may vote without official leading and without the Whips telling. If he would do so, this would reconcile these two babies. I really don't see how Gladstone can accept modifications, before Committee, urged in this *sic volo sic jubes* style. Could you suggest from Chamberlain (as from yourself) that he might be satisfied with the open question. He says that he would be beaten in Committee. But I don't see this—and even if it were so, he would have many opportunities hereafter to get back his friends, the Irish, if he really wants them. The great point is to find some *modus vivendi* which would keep the Radicals together, and to this he ought to subordinate much, instead of making difficulties. The Radicals do not take his point about the objections to fight in Committee, and there will be a row about his bullying the G. O. M. On so big an issue, his position is untenable—the Whig one is more reasonable. If only once a negotiation could be started upon the open question basis, Mr. Gladstone would manage to dodge him into voting for the Second Reading, and this is all that is wanted in Chamberlain's own interest.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Sir Charles Dilke to Mr. Labouchere

PYRFORD, WOKING (undated).

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—It looks as though the Second Reading will be rejected, and, if Mr. Gladstone appeals to the constituencies, it will, I fancy, be a rout. But I quite agree as to the great importance of patching up the fued between Chamberlain and Mr. Gladstone, for the sake of everybody and everything, and I shall continue to do all I can in that sense. I had a letter from Chamberlain as to Ireland on Saturday to which I replied. I think my reply will bring another, and on that I can try again in your sense.—Yours,

CHAS. W. DILKE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

POPE'S VILLA, TWICKENHAM, April 24, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Naturally the Radical Associations want to hear you, for even so humble an individual as I am gets a dozen letters every morning asking me to go to meetings at all sorts of places.

I think that the feeling in the country is this:

They regard the principle of the Bill to be a Domestic Legislation for Ireland. The Radicals are in the main opposed to "orders" and to exclusion of Irish. They do not like the idea of Radicals voting with the Whigs and Tories against the principle, and the view that it would be impossible for successful opposition to take place in Committee against the "orders" and the "admission" is too complicated for their understandings. In fact they don't want a Party division to be spoilt, and wish to humble the Tories and the Whigs.

Morley writes to me to-day to say that your speech means coercion. I have replied that in all things there must be a give and take.

I am sure that if you can get an assurance that the question of the admission is to be a *bona fide* open one, that we should win on it—assuming that the Conservatives go for it. Such an arrangement avoids the necessity of either side marching under the harrow.

Once the question left open, in the interval between the Second Reading and Committee, we could get up a strong agitation for the "admission," whilst no one would be opposing us, and you would have all the credit of the alteration.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

HIGHBURY, MOOR GREEN,
BIRMINGHAM, April 30, 1886.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—I think that you must now see that the Irish Bills in their present form are doomed.

I have a list of 111 Liberals pledged against Second Reading. Of these I know of 59 who have publicly communicated their intentions to their constituents. I believe most of the rest are safe, but, making all allowances for desertions, there is not much chance of forcing the Second Reading through.

I know of many men who are pledged like yourself to vote for amendments in Committee, and some who are pledged to vote against Second Reading if the amendments are not carried.

The Land Bill has no friends at all.

It is difficult to say what my own following as distinguished from Hartington's is, but I reckon that something like fifty would vote for Second Reading, if my amendments were conceded.

It is time that a final decision was taken. The fight is growing hotter every day and the division of the party will be irretrievable if the controversy is pushed much further. I am not surprised at the action of the Caucuses. I know them pretty well, and they consist of the most active and thoroughgoing partisans. But it is the men who stay away who turn elections, and there will be a larger abstention on this Irish question than we have ever had before in the history of the Liberal party.

I believe the issue is in the hands of Radicals like yourself. If you exert the necessary pressure the Bills may be recast. Much has been done by their introduction. The Party as a whole has accepted their principle of Home Rule, and we might come to an agreement about the details. But this will be out

of the question if we go into opposite lobbies on the Second Reading.

There is no necessity to withdraw the Bill at once If the Government will give the necessary assurance of amendments to retain Irish Representation and Imperial control of taxation, we might carry Second Reading and then the Bills could be committed *pro forma* for the necessary changes, or withdrawn for the session.

All our people would be delighted at the postponement of the dissolution, and in the interval we might kiss and be friends. I do not suppose the Chief will listen to this, but I have thought it right to make one more effort before the battle is finally engaged —Yours truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, May 1, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I have been doing my best to get some sort of *modus vivendi* in which the honours of war would be divided.

I had a letter from Morley yesterday in which he promised to be most conciliatory at Glasgow. He said:

> "I don't think there is a pin of difference between you and me as to the desirableness of passing the Second Reading at almost any cost. But Chamberlain wants us to go down on our knees, and this cannot be done for the money."

He had previously suggested to me what he said, I see, at Glasgow about the Irish Members coming back in three years. I replied that this might possibly form a basis, but that it must in this case be understood that they came back without any further legislature on the subject. To this he demurred, but I think that he would not make difficulties.

I do not dispute your figures, but I would point out to you that some of your fifty can be manipulated. As a rule a big cave does not hold together. Some of its Members in the end take refuge in voting for a Party Bill, and give as a pretext some

phrase used by the Minister for having done so, and in the G. O. M. you have a past master in these sort of catching phrases.

I was brought up in diplomacy. When two countries send each other their ultimatums, a third country desirous of peace proposes something between the two, and peace is made upon its adoption by the belligerents.

I have been suggesting that Mr. Gladstone should agree to leave the ques ion an open one, the word "open" being understood to signify that the Whips do not tell, and that every one—Ministers included—should be allowed to vote as they please. I don't well see how the G. O. M. could go further. Although we may call it a detail, the exclusion of Irish Members is really a fundamental principle in the Bill, and were he absolutely to agree to change it, this would be, as Morley says, going down on his knees to you who, whether right or wrong, are the head centre of the Radical minority, and not of the majority. Would you, yourself, eat humble pie to this extent? Moreover, I think that, if he had to submit this proposal to his Cabinet, there would be suspicions, and the Cabinet just now can hardly stand another split.

I have never gathered that Mr. Gladstone himself is opposed to the retention of the Irish. All that he says is, "The problem is a difficult one: show me a good plan and I have no objection to adopt it."

There is another way of meeting you, but I don't know whether Mr. Gladstone would accept it. It is this. Leave matters as they now are with respect to the Irish Members, by eliminating all clauses excluding them. Their position would thus be left to future legislation on the subject. They would in this case sit as they are, and vote upon Imperial and English local issues until the entire question is treated in a separate Bill.

A third plan might be that of John Morley's, to exclude them for three years, and for them at the end to come back as they are now, unless any alteration during the interval be legislatively made in their position.

Parnell is very much opposed to the retention. He puts his opposition upon the difficulty of getting Irishmen to come over. He asks whether there are to be two separate elections, or only

one. In the first case, he complains of the expense and of the difficulty of finding men, in the second he asks how men can sit and vote in both Parliaments when they are both sitting at the same time.

Do pray be conciliatory in the matter, and be satisfied with the substance. If the "open question" were granted, I am sure that you would have a majority of Radicals, who agree with you in the main, but think that they ought to regard the Second Reading at the conservation of the principle of a domestic Legislature for Ireland. After all, a General Election with a Radical split would either give Mr. Gladstone a majority against you, or would end in a Conservative victory, neither of which would be a gain to you.

I take Brand's constituents of Stroud, and the constituency of Ipswich as specimens of public feeling, for I have been at both of them this week.

At Stroud we had a meeting. The Whigs did not attend. Winterbotham took the chair. He announced that he should vote against the Bill. There were groans and "three cheers for Gladstone." I went for the Bill, but explained that it was desirable that the Irish Members should be retained, and that this was your view. There were shouts of "let him vote with Gladstone on the Second Reading." At the end some overzealous ass proposed "three cheers for Brand." This was met with a chorus of howls and groans. I enquired later on what was the real position, and was told that all the Radicals were against Brand, but that there would be no use calling upon him to resign, as about five hundred Whigs would stick to him, and these with the Conservatives would secure his return.

At Ipswich the meeting was entirely for the Second Reading. I praised up Collins, etc. They cheered his name, but whilst dead against the Land Bill, went for the other Bill, and did not seem to care much for details. Two of the County Members spoke. They had been returned—mainly through Collins's exertions—but they told me that the agricultural labourers wanted the question settled, and did not care much how it was settled.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

P. S.—You have never let me have your "plan" in reply to the observation, that the idea is good in theory, but that the practical difficulties are insuperable.

Telegram, Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Labouchere

HAWARDEN, May 1, 1886.

Herbert Gladstone expected from Scotland to-night letter from me to Midlothian will shortly appear.[1]

GLADSTONE.

LABOUCHERE,
10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, S. W.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

POPE'S VILLA, TWICKENHAM, May 1, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I have just got this telegram. If Mr. Gladstone has not told you that he is going to write his letter, don't please let it out. I sent him yesterday your figures as to the division, and preached as strongly as I could conciliation, telling him that some sort of give-and-take *modus vivendi* should be arrived at, otherwise the Bill might be lost.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, May 3, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Mr. Gladstone has your ultimatumest of ultimatums. My impression is that he will assent. I had a talk with Morley this morning, and knocked it well into his head that the question, as you say, is to be or not to be as regards the Bill.

[1] On May 3, a manifesto was issued from Mr. Gladstone in which he intimated that the Land Bill was no longer to be an essential article of the Liberal faith, and that, in the Home Rule Bill, all questions of detail were subsidiary. The only important thing was to support the principle of establishing a Legislative Body in Dublin empowered to make laws for Irish as distinguished from Imperial affairs.

The decision will depend very much upon the figures. Of course they don't take yours *au pied de la lettre*, but they evidently are thoroughly uncomfortable about them. They admit that the feeling throughout the country is in favour of the Irish remaining. Harcourt blustered fearfully in the Cabinet about his intentions. Perhaps it might be well if you were to write him a letter. If we can bring about an arrangement, it will be a great thing for the party—put aside the Bill.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

HOUSE OF COMMONS, May 3, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I am pretty sure now that your terms will be accepted.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

HOUSE OF COMMONS, May 3, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Since writing to you Arnold Morley asked me to come into his room. He said that he had been shown your letter, and wished to ask me whether I thought that the terms were the lowest that you would take. I said "Yes," that I thought they were. Was I quite certain that you would not vote for the bill if there were no concession? Quite certain. Was it to be understood that you would vote for it if Mr. Gladstone said that the Government would support or bring in a clause granting representation to Ireland, leaving it for Committee to say how many constituted representation? I said, that I understood this, but that he had better consult your letter.

I see that there would be a row at once if Mr. Gladstone were to go into details, so I should think that it would be better to leave them alone. I told him that moreover Members (one had) had told me that they would only vote for the Bill if you were satisfied, and that he must perceive that the Radicals were in favour of the Irish remaining here. He admitted this, and

promised to explain this to Mr. Gladstone; he had, he said, in fact represented this to him ten days ago, only then your terms were not so limited as now.

Perhaps it might be well if you would write me a line (not in answer to this, or as though I had written to you) urging a speedy settlement—for Mr. Gladstone is apt to wait for something to turn up to his advantage.

His letter to his electors is good clap-trap.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

Birmingham, May 4, 1886.

My dear Labouchere,—My list alters every day as I receive further reports from my correspondents. I have only had notice of two deserters, and the total figures now stand as follows:

Promised against,	133
Absolutely pledged,	84

I have not heard anything from Mr. Gladstone, but have written to Harcourt as you suggest. I am unable to make more of Mr. Gladstone's manifesto than of many other of his public utterances, but I note one point with satisfaction. He says in effect that the retention of Irish members is a mere detail: to me it is vital, but if it is only a detail to him surely there is no excuse for his not publicly giving way.—Believe me, yours very truly,

J. Chamberlain.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

Highbury, Moor Green,
Birmingham, May 4, 1886.

My dear Labouchere,—I have a number of enquiries as to what I am going to do. I thought I had made it all clear in my speeches, but I reply to every one that I shall certainly vote against Second Reading unless I can get satisfactory assurances beforehand; and that I will not vote for Second Reading unless I know that the Government will keep the Irish Representation

on its present footing. That means, of course, either 103 members or a reduction according to population. Any other representation would be illogical and absurd. The interest of Ireland in Imperial questions is in proportion to population and not to her share of total taxation. It might be in proportion to her share of the taxation for *Imperial* objects. Surely the best plan would be to accept your suggestion and for the Government to agree to drop the clauses about Representation at Westminster, leaving it an open question for Committee whether there should be any reduction, or any restriction on their liberty of speaking and voting on non-Imperial subjects.

But will not Mr. Gladstone be content to secure the affirmation of the principle by Second Reading, vote, and then commit the Bill *pro forma* for amendments or withdraw it for the session?

If anything is to be done it should be at once, otherwise I doubt if, even with my assistance, the Second Reading can be carried. The opposition is more numerous than I supposed, and is growing.—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

In a previous letter I have sent you my latest figures.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

HOUSE OF COMMONS, May 6, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Morley would have agreed to leave out the clause. Mr. Gladstone would not. He has elaborated some alternative scheme, which is to come before the Cabinet to-morrow.

From your personal standpoint I should say "take it." It will be a substantial concession, and will be made to you. If you do not, very possibly several of your followers will accept it.

I really don't believe that you will get more. It will fully recognise the paramount character of the Imperial Parliament, enable Irish to vote on taxation, Imperial matters, etc., and I doubt whether the feeling is in favour of their voting on English issues.

Anyhow, you get your principle recognised. The Bill, if it passes here, will be thrown out in the Lords. We shall go to

the country, not on details of any Bill, but on a domestic legislature for Ireland, and many things may happen before next year. —Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

P. S.—Don't say anything about this yet, for it is not definite, and won't be until to-morrow's Cabinet.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

HOUSE OF COMMONS, May 7, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—The Cabinet yesterday was not a formal one; there is to be one to-morrow. Some, I understand, are in favour of cutting out the clause respecting the exclusion of the Irish, and leaving the matter to future legislation—others suggest alternative schemes. Of this I am certain, it may be that terms will not be agreed to before the discussion on the Second Reading, but, provided that the Bill cannot be carried without you and your friends, the point will be yielded. I regard therefore the matter as done, so don't pray act as though it were not. Any one takes a certain time to make grimaces before he consumes his humble pie, and does not gulp it down, so long as he has any hope of being able to avoid doing so.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, May 8, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—I have just been reporting progress at Downing Street. Wolverton, who was there, quite agreed that if you want ninety Irish, you ought to have them; and, in fact, the simplest thing is to leave the lot as they are.

It was admitted that the Bill would require modifications, if the Irish are to sit. Objection was taken to our collecting all revenues on the score that the presence of the hated Saxon throughout the country would put the backs of the Irish up.

You will perhaps remember that Parnell entirely objects to the amount of the quota, and so, by showing him that he will lose by the whisky system, we might get him to unite in insisting upon an alteration.

The idea of Herschell—which I put forward as mine, and said that you did not seem to object—took. If they can hit it off in the Cabinet by four o'clock, they are to let me know, and I will send you a telegram.

Things being as they are, I go to Hastings, with *Thérèse Raquin* to read in the train, with the hope that we are again a happy family.

Don't with Herschell make it too clear that the food on which our friends are browsing is humble pie. The substance is everything, and no sooner will it be known that you mean to vote for the Second Reading, and that Mr. Gladstone knocks the bottom out of his tub as regards the exclusion of the Irish, than the Tories and the Whigs will point the moral.

I read out the words which Mr. Gladstone was to use in his speech. "What then are the modifications?" they asked. I said that as he was not wanted to specify them, they ought to rest and be happy with the phrase. I said that all that I had written down was in no sort of way binding on you, and, so far as you were concerned, was non-existing, and that they were to be treated as my own pious opinions.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

P. S.—I said that I gathered that you would not be in this afternoon, but to-morrow morning.

Telegram, Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

May 8, 1886.

Stansfield who was in train says all went right at meeting this afternoon Herschell not there thought to be out of town if you do not hear from him this is why.

Labouchere.

Mr. Arnold Morley to Mr. Labouchere

12 Downing Street, S. W., May 8, 1886.

My dear Labouchere,—Herschell had to leave town before the end of the Cabinet, and on his return on Monday he will be sitting in the House of Lords.

Perhaps later on it may be arranged.

Would you or would you not telegraph to him to explain his not coming?—Yours truly,

ARNOLD MORLEY.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

Sunday, May 9, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—On coming back here from Hastings, I have found this letter from Arnold Morley. I think that the "cave in" is complete, and if you only seize the first opportunity to accentuate it and to recognise it, your triumph will be complete—details are, comparatively speaking, unimportant. If you get into a discussion about them you lose your triumph. You went for "full representation," and, as I understand it, you get it. At the meeting at Hastings a speaker alluded to you—dead silence. The man next me said, "A few months ago they would have all cheered." When I spoke I said that I thought Mr. Gladstone would agree to Irish Representatives, in which case I thought that you would vote for Second Reading upon which the audience cheered again and again. This shows how the cat jumps even in a place like Hastings, which is not very Radical.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Sunday, May 9, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Morley has just been here. He don't want you to be told more than that you will be satisfied. I told him that I had seen you, and had said generally that you were mistaken in supposing that the Cabinet did not intend to yield, and that I had gathered from you that if they did, you would probably vote for the Second Reading. They are, I find, in some trouble about their definite statement about the third point—the right of the Irish to come here by requisition of the Dublin Parliament on all Imperial matters. They are prepared to elaborate some plan for them to legislate—or to have the power to legislate—upon such matters, but they have not yet themselves made out the plan to their satisfaction, nor can they agree as to what is Imperial and what is not. Mr. Gladstone therefore will

be rather guarded on this head, but he will (says Morley) make it quite clear that they accept the principle, and they *bona fide* are prepared to give it effect. They are, moreover, rather afraid of being too definite, because they have not seen nor heard anything from Parnell, and will not have the opportunity to do so before the debate commences. They assert that practically representation and taxation involve pretty well all Imperial measures—and this is to a great extent the fact, for the Crown declares war, makes treaties, etc. Anyhow they are quite ready to meet you on this, and if you think that Mr. Gladstone's words are too vague, or can suggest any others, Herschell will consult with you. Morley says that they are not going to take the debate next week, *de die in diem*. So if needed, anything can be cleared up on Tuesday. But he, of course, is anxious that you should declare your acceptance of the Bill as soon as possible.

I finally told him to impress upon his great chief, that he must be clear. I really think that they are fully prepared to satisfy you.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S. W., Sunday.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—What does your letter mean? It seems to me that you are being bamboozled by the old Parliamentary hand. Both Mr. Gladstone and Herbert Gladstone told people yesterday that they were not going to give way.

I am not going to leave the matter to Committee; unless the assurances to-morrow are precise and definite, I shall certainly vote against the Second Reading.—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, Monday, May 10, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—Morley did not leave until one o'clock this morning, when I had a letter posted to you. I think that I put it perhaps too strongly about the "On Imperial matters," but I had been fighting for the exact words, and was cross

about their not being precisely as I understood they were to be. Morley vowed that they would be. I said that they were not. Practically they are. I really do believe that they have not got a definition of "imperial," and they only do not want to bind themselves to the Irish Parliament being obliged to *demand* representation. I said "peace and war." Morley replied, "this belongs to the Crown, and is raised by supplies." I suggested "a commercial reciprocity treaty." He replied, "this too is in the hands of the Crown, and is raised by a change in taxation."

I do not think that there is any *mala fides*, but a desire to avoid hostile criticism, on "what is Imperial." Morley vowed to me again and again that there was no intention to dodge, and that having given up the principle they asked for nothing better than to make it full. I suggested, "all questions not excluded by the Bill." He replied, "state what questions, not involved in taxation, you mean, and show where one does not overlap the other."

As regards the Committee, they still hold to it, and this will cover most of the questions.

Please think this over, and if you can suggest any definite line of demarcation, and will give it me in the House, I will let Mr. Gladstone have it before he speaks.

My last words to Morley were: "Chamberlain is quite fair on his side: he has a natural distrust of the old Parliamentary hand, and will not be humbugged. He no doubt will not quarrel over mere words, but he must have the substance. Knock this well into Mr. Gladstone's head."

I write you this, because, thinking it over, I may have exaggerated a thing in which there is nothing important.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

House of Commons, Monday, May 10, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—I gave Arnold Morley three questions to take to Mr. Gladstone.

1. Would he propose the retention of Irish Members for all questions of taxation?

2. Would they come here like English Members?

3. Would taxation include everything which was involved in Imperial taxation affecting them?

He answered "yes" to all, but said that in regard to taxation he had suddenly thought that the tea tax is renewed every year, and that he had not put this before the Cabinet, but he personally had no sort of objection to their voting on it, and did not suppose that the Cabinet had.

I suggested that Herschell should see you. He writes to say that he will be engaged all Tuesday and suggests Wednesday.

I have told them—which they all know—that the speech has produced the most deplorable effect, and that you are quite right in being indignant; and that unless they definitely make up their minds to explain everything satisfactorily, the Bill is lost. This they admit.

I am urging on them to agree to introduce themselves a clause about "other Imperial matters," and I tell them that unless they are frank and yield on such points it is utterly vain to hope to win over you or any one else.

The funny thing is that Mr. Gladstone has walked off under the conviction that his speech was most satisfactory.—Yours,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Telegram, Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

HOUSE OF COMMONS, May 11, 1886.

I think they are quite conscious of their mistake, and ready to capitulate along the line. Would it not be possible to see the emissary to-morrow or Thursday?

LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S. W., May 11, 1886.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—In the remarkable speech of the Prime Minister last night,[1] nothing impressed me more than the passages in which he spoke of the advantages of public declarations in the House of Commons as contrasted with the inconvenience of underground negotiations carried on elsewhere.

[1] Motion made for Second Reading of Home Rule Bill and amendment. on May 10th.

Under all circumstances you will, I am sure, approve my decision not to enter on any further private discussions of the proposals of the Government.

If they have any fresh modifications to suggest, I hope they will state them in the House, when I am sure they will receive the most favourable consideration from all who, like myself, deeply regret the differences of opinion which have arisen in the Liberal Party.

I am engaged all Wednesday, but this is of no consequence, as in the present position of matters no good could come of any private interview.—Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Labouchere appends a note to this letter as follows:

"This is in reply to a letter I wrote Chamberlain last night to say that he would do well to keep quiet, as probably Herschel, would see him on Wednesday—not having been able to see him last Saturday."

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

TWICKENHAM, May 17, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—If I speak to-day or to-morrow, I shall say nothing about negotiations.

This is, I think, about what occurred. Mr. Gladstone was ready to yield and bring in the "Imperial matters" Clause before the Saturday Cabinet. At the Cabinet he was asked whether he had elaborated such a clause, which previously he had said was impossible to devise. He had to admit that he had not, and so a lot of asses, some of whom did not understand the exact point, and the necessity of sticking to any agreement, talked on until it was time for them all to go away.

On Sunday, when I first saw Arnold Morley after receiving your note, he vowed that it was all agreed to, and as I told you I wrote down the three points in his presence. When he came in the evening, after having sent to Mr. Gladstone, he explained that it was impossible absolutely to say that Mr. Gladstone would pledge himself to *bring* in the Third Clause, because he had not framed any Clause, and could not give a definite promise until he knew whether he could frame it. I urged him not to leave

Mr. Gladstone until he had framed it, and there was a Cabinet on Monday. Still it was not framed. Hence Mr. Gladstone's extraordinary shilly-shally speech. They all perceived what fools they had been, except those who were anxious that no agreement should be come to with you (notably Harcourt who is playing for the succession), and it was hoped that Herschell would be able to smooth down matters. There was to be a Cabinet on Thursday, and I think the Clause would have been framed, only by this time they did not see why they should yield, if concession would not *ensure* the Bill, and Mr. Gladstone (as usual) thought that time should be taken to see how things developed themselves.

In the House, as you know, there is a feeling that the Bill should be read as a declaration of the principle of "a local legislature," and nothing more. Mr. Gladstone has not said a word about this. It would be a bitter pill, and he is just now in a prophetic state of belief that, if he dissolves, he will carry everything before him. What the Constituencies will do, neither you, nor he, nor any one else can predicate. It may be that with the Irish vote, the desire to settle, the belief in him, and the notion that he has been treated ungenerously, he will win. My impression is that we shall be much as we are, except that the Tories will be strengthened at the expense of the Liberal and Radical seceders.

Now, I put this to you for my private information. It is no proposal from Government. They hold that you are irreconcilable, and are sulking. Supposing that he would withdraw the Bill after Second Reading, could you have a better and a bigger triumph? Read Salisbury's speech. Does this look like real union? Randolph is used to promise privately, but Salisbury has a vague idea of honour, and so he explains what such promises are worth.

Of course I don't know what Hartington promises.[1] But

[1] On May 14th, a meeting summoned by Lord Hartington met at Devonshire House, at which Mr. Chamberlain was present. It was calculated at this meeting that the "dissenting Liberals" would amount to something over one hundred. The important point of the meeting was that Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington agreed, for the time, to act together and to vote against the Second Reading.

does he love you? No. The Whigs are all running about boasting how they have you in their toils.

You may believe me or not, but I really do want to see a way to a reconciliation, because I want you to be our leader. A reconciliation is still possible on the basis of withdrawing the Bill after reading it a second time. To withdraw it before would be too much humble pie, and Mr. Gladstone sees—and no doubt you do—that this would ruin him. Moreover, the man has some feeling in the matter.

Supposing that you were to announce on Thursday that the Government must withdraw after Second Reading. If Mr. Gladstone was to do this, afterwards, he would be knocking under completely, and yet almost all the Radicals (except Illingworth and Co.) would endorse your suggestion.

By autumn many things may happen. Mr. Gladstone would have brought in a Bill, he would have withdrawn it on your demand, and you may depend on it, he never would bring in one again in the same shape, but one satisfactory to Radicals and unsatisfactory to Whigs and Conservatives.

This therefore seems to me far better than discussing concessions, whilst from your own standpoint I emphatically say that it is better for you than to go to the country against Mr. Gladstone, against what is called the party, and with such a lot as Salisbury and the Whigs, who regard you as the devil incarnate. Let the latter gravitate to the Tories.

There is also this: sentiment is a factor in politics. The notion that you are in any way acting ungenerously to Mr. Gladstone renders, or will render, the Radicals rabid against you, and after all they are the only persons who agree with you in politics, or who have any real idea of being *your party*.

I write this for your *private* eye. I shall not say to any one that I have written to you.

If, however, you hold to the idea of the Second Reading and the withdrawal, I would work in that direction.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

P. S.—Your Ulster fervour does not wash. They are utter humbugs, these worthy Orangemen.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

40 Prince's Gardens, S. W., May 17, 1886.

My dear Labouchere,—I have never doubted your sincere desire to bring about an arrangement. I do not intend to make any allusion in public to the negotiations. I blame no one for their failure—there were misunderstandings on both sides. But I cannot conceive how Mr. Gladstone could have supposed that the terms of his speech were calculated to meet the objections taken. As regards the present situation I am pledged now to vote against the Second Reading, and I must do so, whatever may be said as to subsequent withdrawal.

Our friends feel—and I think they are right—that they cannot treat a vote for Second Reading of a Bill as though it were only an abstract resolution.

I admit the truth of nearly all that you say as to the prospects of the party. No man can foretell the results of the General Election, but I expect with you that the Tories will gain. I think they will gain chiefly at the expense of the supporters of the Bill, but in this I may be mistaken.

I cannot struggle against the torrent of lies and slanders directed against my personal action. I can only say that I have been, I believe, more anxious for reconciliation that any one of my followers or present allies. I have not to my knowledge said a single bitter word about Mr. Gladstone, or expressed either in private or in public anything but respect for him and belief in his absolute sincerity. Yet in spite of this the supporters of the Government are more bitter against me than against any one else.

For the present I shall maintain the same reserve, and shall not attempt reprisals; but if the discussion goes on much longer on the same terms I suppose I shall have to defend myself and to say what I think of some of those gentlemen who, having swallowed their own principles and professions, are indignant with me because my digestion is less accommodating.

I have an enormous correspondence, some of it hostile, but most of it friendly. The breach in the party is widening, and in a short time it will be beyond repair.

All I can say is that I have done all in my power to heal it—

short of giving up my conscientious convictions and assenting to measures which I believe are totally wrong. I have not the least feeling against Mr. Gladstone; he is sincere in all that he is doing—but I cannot think favourably of many of those who are loud in his support, but who to my certain knowledge are as much opposed to his Bills in their hearts as I am myself.—Yours very truly,

J. Chamberlain.

P. S.—Salisbury's speech is as bad as anything can be.[1]

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

Truth Buildings, Carteret Street,
Queen Anne's Gate, S. W.

My dear Chamberlain,—Herschell and one or two others were to meet (or possibly have met) to-day to decide upon what proposals were to be submitted to you. But I will let them have your letter. If the G. O. M. loses his Bill, it will be from not having been able to be clear for five minutes in his seventy-seven years,—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

Tuesday—or rather Wednesday Morning, May 25, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—I am pretty certain that unless wiser counsels prevail, Mr. Gladstone will not consent to withdraw the Clause. Childers, who has been doing all that he can to induce him to do so, finds that the Cabinet (so far as they have an opinion) are against it, and Mr. Gladstone strongly so. Morley vows that he would rather die, and that sort of thing. I cannot find that they have any valid reason for this, but so it is.

Mr. Gladstone will, I think, in as plain words as possible (if he can be plain for a few minutes), fall back upon the programme

[1] Mr. Chamberlain was probably referring to Lord Salisbury's speech of May 15th, in which he suggested that the Irish belonged to the races incapable of self-government, such as—the Hottentots!

that we were negotiating, and say that he will so modify the Bill in Committee that it will give the Irish Representation here on Imperial matters, and he seems to have a notion floating in his brain of announcing that if the Second Reading be passed he will either withdraw or defer the Bill.

The notion seems to be that the Liberal opponents may be put down at 100, and that this will reduce them to 70; these calculations, however, are evidently upon exceedingly vague data.

It is pretty clear that a number of the opponents do not like the idea of a dissolution, and that they are very anxious for an arrangement. It is therefore quite possible that they will come in upon some such basis.

Do pray think the matter over, and consider whether it is not worth your while taking these assurances as a concession to you. Of course it is not certain that they will be definite, but you might insist upon their being made definite in the House of Commons.

I think that it is a proof of astounding weakness not giving up the Clause. These people can never make up their minds either to fight or to make peace. The G. O. M. has a natural love of shilly-shally, and those around him encourage him in this for their own purposes. My own belief is that they don't want you to vote for the Bill, and that you would spoil their game if you did. The G. O. M. cannot last, and if only you would rally you would be certain of the mantle, whereas with Goschen and Hartington you never possibly can get on.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, *The Derby Day*, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—If you can agree to anything less than the excision of the twenty-fourth Clause, and consider that it would be useful to let Mr. Gladstone know this, could you write me a letter stating your views? This I could let Mr. Gladstone have to-morrow morning, as a letter to me and *not intended* for him to see, with the understanding that it is for his

private reading and not for his Cabinet. It might probably lead him to go farther than he otherwise would in his concessions. He, no doubt, wants to pass his Bill, and although he believes that he would sweep the country at an election, he must in his calmer moments know that he may possibly not do so. But I am certain that there are men in the Cabinet who, whilst pretending to be in favour of conciliation, are doing all they can to prevent it—some arbitrarily, and some because their private ambitions point to your being forced into a position of antagonism. I do not think that Mr. Gladstone will be likely to change in regard to the Cabinet decision respecting the twenty-fourth Clause. The point therefore is to find some other mode of ensuring what is practically a surrender in respect to Irish representation here. The excision of the Clause is the simple and direct method, but when did our venerable friend ever take the direct method? If, however, he *clearly*, *distinctly*, and *definitely* pledges himself to introduce a Clause having the same object as the excision, and to incorporate it in his Bill, the result is the same, although the road may not be quite as straight. He might easily be parried in the House by your saying, "I understand the Prime Minister to, etc., etc.," and then you might fairly say that you have got precisely what you want, and thus bear off the honours of war. You have never publicly insisted upon the particular mode by means of which the desired end is to be attained.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, Wednesday.

My dear Chamberlain,—I have just got your note and have *privately* let Mr. Gladstone know your position. I have suggested this, that if he intends to insert a Clause giving the Irish Representation, he must necessarily withdraw the twenty-fourth, and that consequently he can use the word "withdraw," which might get over the difficulty. But whether he will do this, I don't know. Except that the Cabinet would not hear of the withdrawal, and leaving matters as they are in regard to

Irish Representation until future Legislation, they seem to have left him a free hand.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

Thursday, May 26, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—There is no doubt about the prorogation. It was settled last night, much against the wishes of some, who regard it as too much of a surrender. I have been urging that Fowler, who is to speak after some Conservative who has got the adjournment for to-morrow, should translate from one hour of Gladstonese into five minutes of English. The absurd objection to this is (as yet) that he is not in the Cabinet. My impression is that most of the Radicals will return to the fold. They don't like a dissolution, with a Liberal enemy against them. This is all very well for you, but the fry will go to the wall in these localities. Some of the Scotch have also come in.

After all, if Mr. Gladstone withdraws his Bill and agrees to bring in another, in which Clause twenty-four is to be reversed—the exclusion being inclusion—he does more than withdraw the clause, and the prorogation was really only decided on by Mr. Gladstone in order to give you full satisfaction. Caine, I hear, says that he never will vote for the Bill—probably not, considering the influence of the Cavendishes at Barrow. If he did, he would not get in.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

May 29, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—I think that I have arranged for a written antidote which will appear on Monday to the "responsible frivolity" of our loquacious and indiscreet friend. I am not yet quite sure whether it is arranged, so please don't say anything to *any one* about it, or, if it appears, say that I had anything to do with it. *He* insists that he said in the House exactly what

he had said at the Meeting.[1] Reading his speech, it is difficult to pin him to any particular passage—the only thing that can be said is that he used phrases, which might cover a wider principle than "a domestic Legislature for Irish affairs." I was asked to put on paper my objections to the speech.

I took these points: (1.) that he made a vote cover a general recognition of the Bill; (2.) that he studiously limited all "reconstruction" to a particular point; (3.) that he implied, and almost stated that *the* Bill was to be introduced, and made no clear offer to consider the whole subject of the details which were to give effect to the principle of his domestic Legislature principle, and did not say that he would consider any suggestions offered to him by leading persons in the Liberal Party.

These are, in point of fact, your criticisms, not mine.

He was astounded at any one not finding all this in his speech, but I said that, surprising as this might be, no one friend or foe had found anything of the kind.

It seems to me that the real object of all should be to tide over the present conjunction, and to leave everything "without prejudice" for this autumn Session. The public do not know the object of their adoration as we do. He is still their fetish, and they regard any doubt of his divine character as sacrilege.

I should have thought that Henry James' idea of not voting would have suited both you and Hartington. It certainly is the most logical outcome of the position. He says that the Bill is a mere declaration of principle. You say that it may be more. He offers to withdraw the Bill, after the principle has been ratified by a vote. You cannot quite believe him in anything beyond that the Bill will be withdrawn. This being so, if all of you were to agree to leave him and his principle to find their level in the House of Commons—to say that you are for a domestic legislature, and therefore cannot vote for the Bill, but that you are not for more, and therefore that you cannot vote for a Bill which *may* involve more. I think that this would put you quite right with the Radicals, and leave you a free hand, although it may

[1] On May 27th Mr. Gladstone held a meeting of Liberals at the Foreign Office, when, in a conciliatory speech, he declared that the Government desired, by a vote on the Second Reading, no more than to establish the *principle* of a measure, which was to give Home Rule to Ireland.

be doubtful whether the Whigs, who go against principle and details, would be quite so wise to accept this solution.

If, however, the Whigs do vote, and if you and your people abstain, it is not quite certain that we should carry the Bill; in which case the outcry would be against the abstainers, and they would be cursed for precipitating a dissolution against the idol.

According to the Whips, Saunders has again got salvation. Half of these people are like women, who are pleased to keep up the "I will" and "I won't" as long as possible in order to be counted. Generally this ends in "I will."

Akers Douglas told the Whips last night that the debate was not to end before Thursday; they could not quite make out whether this was official or not.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, June 5, 1886.

MY DEAR CHAMBERLAIN,—At the desire of a large number of Radical Members of Parliament, I write to make an appeal to you with regard to your attitude upon the Government for Ireland Bill. They are all of them amongst your warmest admirers, and they have always looked to you as the leader of their phase of political thought. They advocated your "unauthorised programme" at the last General Election, and they have persistently defended you against the attacks and aspersions of all who have denounced you and your views upon political or social issues. With much that you have said upon the Irish Bill they agree, and they think that they have a right to ask you to give a fair consideration to any request that they may make to you in order to maintain the union which they are anxious should exist between you and them. In your speech upon the Second Reading of the Bill, you said that you were in favour of the principles of a separate domestic Legislature for Ireland, with due reservations, but that you did not consider that Mr. Gladstone had made it sufficiently clear that voting for the Bill would mean nothing but a recognition of this principle, and would leave its supporters absolute independence of judgment with regard to the new Bill that he might introduce in an autumn

Session. I think that he has met this objection in his letter to Mr. Moulton that has been published to-day. We think, therefore, that perhaps you could not respond to our wishes, and either vote for the Bill or—if you could not go so far as this—abstain from voting. The issue of the division on Monday is, we believe, entirely in your hands. Should the Bill be lost there will be a General Election at once, which will disturb the trade and commerce of the country; and it will take place at a time which, as no doubt you are aware, will be the worst period of the year for the Radicals, owing to the Registration Laws now in force. It is impossible to shut our eyes to the fact that a General Election, without you on our side, may lead to a Whig-Tory, or Tory-Whig Government, which would relegate to the dim and distant future all those measures which you and we so ardently desire may become law. Under these circumstances is it too much for us to ask you to make an effort to avert all these contingencies? When Achilles returned to his tent, the Greeks were defeated. What would it have been had Achilles lent the weight of his arm to the Trojans? I fully recognise how conciliatory your attitude has been, and how anxiously you have sought to see your way from disruption during all the discussions which I have had with you. I still cannot help hoping that, in view of the distant assurances of Mr. Gladstone in his letter to Mr. Moulton, and in view of the wishes of so many of your warmest admirers in the House of Commons, you will see your way to defer to the request which, through me, they make to you.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

June 5, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—This letter is really written at the desire of a lot of Radicals. They were pestering me all last evening.

The position is this: 316 pledged for, 136 pledged against, leaving out the Speaker and those absent; there are about 26 not absolutely pledged on either side, or inclined to reconsider their pledges. We have got some to promise to abstain or to follow the Maker Pease in voting for the Bill. But we have not yet enough, and so far as I can see at present the Bill is lost.

The issue therefore really depends upon you. Surely it would be well to stave it off by saving the Bill. Much may happen before autumn. We may lose the G. O. M., who has a very collapsed look. Anyhow, if he does bring in *his* Bill again, it will never pass in the autumn, but will be lost by a large majority.

I am really writing to you without speaking to any one of the Government, nor at the suggestion of the Government. You might yield very gracefully to the Radicals, and I make the letter an appeal *forma pauperis*. Were you to do so, you would become the most popular man in England, with all who are honestly your political adherents, for I need not say that the Whigs and Tories are not likely to adore you for long. It would be delicious to spring a correspondence on the Government and the public on Monday morning. I am going down to Twickenham this afternoon until Monday. If you think it any good I would meet you anywhere before going.

This occurred to me yesterday. Mr. Gladstone might adjourn the debate till some day in the autumn Session, and then carry it on, after stating all the changes he will make in his Bill. The difficulty of this is, that he vows that it is against all Parliamentary rule to legislate after the Approbation Act. I don't know whether he could meet this by votes on account. Then, too, is it certain that he would have a majority? If however you approve of this, I would again suggest it.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S. W., June 5, 1886.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—I thank you for your letter of this morning, and sincerely appreciate the spirit in which it is written, but especially your recognition that my attitude has been conciliatory throughout these unfortunate differences, and that I have been at all times most anxious to prevent the disruption of the Liberal Party.

You do not give me the names of the friends on whose behalf you write, and who now urge me to vote in favour of the Second Reading of a Bill with many of my objections to which they themselves agree. I do not know therefore whether or no they

have already pledged themselves to take the course which you urge upon me, but I assume that this is the case as I have not myself received any communications in the same sense from any of those who have declared their inability to support the Second Reading.

I am unable to accept your reference to my speech as quite accurate, but I adhere on every point to the words of the original report. I quite admit that Mr. Gladstone has given ample assurance that he will not hold any member who may vote for the Second Reading as committed thereby to a similar vote for the Second Reading of the Bill when reintroduced in October, but the question still remains whether such members will not be obliged to take this course in order to preserve their own logical consistency.

Up to the present time Mr. Gladstone has given no indication whatever that the Bill to be presented in October will be materially different from the Bill now before the House. On the contrary, he has distinctly stated that he will not depart from the main outlines of the present measure. It is, however, to the main outlines of the present Bill that the opposition of my friends and myself has been directed, and it appears to me that we should be stultifying ourselves if we were to abstain at the last moment from giving effect to our conscientious convictions. We are ready to accept as a principle the expediency of establishing some kind of legislative authority in Ireland subject to the conditions which Mr. Gladstone himself has laid down, but we honestly believe that none of these conditions are satisfactorily secured by the plan which has been placed before us. I share your apprehension as to the General Election at the present time; but the responsibility for this must, I think, rest with those who will have brought in and forced to a division a Bill which, in the words of Mr. Bright, "not twenty members outside the Irish party would support if Mr. Gladstone's great authority were withdrawn from it."—I am, yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

P. S.—As I understand that many Radical members are cognisant of your letter, I propose to send it together with my reply for publication in the *Times*.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

10 Queen Anne's Gate, June 5, 1886.

My dear Chamberlain,—Yes, I thought of publishing if you were to agree—but if not—I rather think it would not conduce to the Second Reading. It might even if you said that you would advise others to abstain, or something of that sort. The G. O. M. will die rather than withdraw his Bill, but he might perhaps be induced to adjourn the debate until autumn, if you were to suggest this. I am off to Twickenham, as I have Palto and Ellen Terry coming down, who (thank God) probably have never heard of the infernal Bill. Randolph is, I believe, coming, but I suppose it is no use asking you to join such frivolous society. My conviction is that the Radicals are damned for years if we are defeated to-morrow.

If you can write anything comforting, and send it here to-morrow morning, I will tell some one here to bring it down at once to Pope's Villa.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME CONSEQUENCES OF BALFOUR'S COERCION POLICY

WHEN Mr. Gladstone's Government was defeated on June 9 by 341 votes to 311, the Prime Minister immediately dissolved Parliament, and the General Election was over before the end of July, the Unionist majority being 118. Mr. Gladstone resigned on July 12, before the final returns were sent in, and, when Parliament met again in August, Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Lord Londonderry, Viceroy. The second great Home Rule battle had been fought and lost.

Of course Irish affairs immediately occupied Parliament, but on September 21 the Land Bill, introduced by Parnell, and upon which, he warned the House, the peace of Ireland depended, was rejected by a majority of 95 votes. On October 23, the Plan of Campaign was launched and furiously denounced by the Conservatives in the House of Commons and on every platform throughout the country. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach resigned the Chief Secretaryship on account of his failing eyesight, and was replaced by Mr. Balfour. The first Parliament that met in 1887 was given notice of two measures for Ireland—a Coercion Bill to be introduced in the House of Commons and a Land Bill in the House of Lords. The Coercion Bill was the most stringent of its kind ever introduced. It abridged and destroyed the

constitutional liberties of the people of Ireland and created new offences. It withdrew the protection of juries, and gave full powers to resident magistrates of dealing with cases of intimidation and of holding public meetings against the will of the executive. It was proposed, moreover, that the measure should be a permanent one, and not restricted to one or a limited number of years.[1]

Two extraordinary events occurred in that year, in both of which Mr. Labouchere played an important part. They both had their indirect origin in the coercive measures which Mr. Balfour succeeded in passing through the House. The first took place during the spring, when the *Times*, in order to strengthen the hands of the Government, in their remorseless warfare on Irish liberties, published, during the course of a series of articles called "Parnellism and Crime," the facsimile of a letter supposed to have been written by Mr. Parnell to Mr. Patrick Egan in 1882, referring brutally to the Phœnix Park murders. The letter was contained in the fourth article of the series. The reader will easily perceive from the following short extracts the spirit in which these articles were conceived: "Be the ultimate goal of these men (the Parnellites) what it will, they are content to march towards it in company with murderers. Murderers provide their funds, murderers share their inmost counsels, murderers have gone forth from the League[2] offices to set their bloody work afoot, and have presently returned to consult the 'constitutional leaders' on the advancement of the cause," occurred in the first article. The third article declared that "even now" the Parnellite conspiracy was controlled by dynamiters and assassins, and proceeded thus: "We have seen how the infernal fabric arose 'like an exhalation' to the sound of murderous oratory; how assassins guarded it

[1] Lord Eversley, *Gladstone and Ireland.*

[2] The Land League founded by Parnell in 1879 for the purpose of bringing about a reduction of rack rents, and facilitating the creation of a peasant proprietary. Egan was the treasurer of the Land League.

about, and enforced the high decrees of the secret conclave within by the ballot and the knife. Of that conclave to-day, three sit in the Imperial Parliament, four are fugitives from the law." The first series of the articles finished up with this appeal: "Men of England! These are the foul and dastardly methods by which the National League and the Parnellites have established their terrorism over a large portion of Ireland. Will you refuse the Government the powers which will enable these cowardly miscreants to be punished, and which will give protection to the millions of honest and loyal people in Ireland?"

It is very certain that all Liberal Unionists, and even a few of the more educated Tory statesmen, realised that the articles were merely theatrical appeals to the contracted imaginations of those armchair politicians, whose ways of influencing voters in rural districts were all powerful, but it was not to be expected that the man in the street could understand them as such. On him they made a profound impression.

The first article appeared on March 7, the second on the 14th, and the third on the 18th. On the 22nd Mr. Balfour gave notice of his Coercion Bill. "Parnellism and Crime" had prepared the way for him. The Bill was read for the first time in the beginning of April, and on the last day of the debate on the Second Reading, April 18, the *Times* published its *pièce de résistance*—what has since become known as "the facsimile letter." It ran as follows:

15/5/82.

DEAR SIR,—I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy. But you can tell him and all others concerned that though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts. You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom you can

trust also, but let not my address be known. He can write to House of Commons.—Yours very truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

I have before me the photograph of the facsimile letter, used in the Parnell Commission, and also the letters received by Mr. Labouchere at different times from the Irish leader, and it seems incredible, on comparing the general style and caligraphy of the former with the latter, how the *Times* agents and Mr. Soames could have been deceived for one moment; but I must not anticipate in this place the verdict of the Commission on the forgery, in the obtaining of which Mr. Labouchere played such a characteristic part. The whole of England was indignant when the issue of the *Times* containing the facsimile letter appeared on their breakfast tables, and even comparatively tender-hearted persons began to think seriously that no treatment of Ireland by the English could be savage enough to avenge the cold-hearted, calculating cruelty of Parnell.

Mr. Balfour's Coercion Bill had not, however, yet become law, and the *Times* continued its popular articles, which were greedily devoured by the public, the body of the second and third series consisting for the most part of an accumulation of evidence to prove that, in the year of the Land League, the conspirators had succeeded in getting the American Clan na Gael and the Irish Parliamentary party into line. It did its work so well that, by the 8th of July, when the Coercion Bill passed its Third Reading, under which, subsequently, fully one-third of the Nationalist members charged in its columns were put into prison, there were very few English people outside the Radical faction who did not think that Ireland had got no more than her deserts.

It was, in the *dénouement* of the series of events, following upon the publication of Mr. Parnell's supposed letter, that Mr. Labouchere played such an important part, and, as it was nearly two years before the mystery was completely

unravelled, the story of the forged letter must now be left, so as to take up in chronological order the second event of 1887 in which Mr. Labouchere was vitally concerned.

Mr. Labouchere kept himself well in touch with what was going on in Ireland, and the following detailed letter that he received from Mr. T. M. Healy towards the end of 1886, gave him a vivid picture of the state of things there during the first half year of the Conservative Government, and assisted him much in the line of policy he consistently followed then and throughout the ensuing years:

The country is really perfectly quiet, and the misfortune is that the Tories are reaping the benefit of Gladstone's policy, and will, of course, claim the credit for their "resolute Government." Moreover, they are putting all kinds of pressure on the landlords to grant abatements. Buller is Soudanizing Kerry à la Gordon, and giving the slave-drivers no quarter, so that with the stoppage of evictions there, moonlighting is coming to an end and the people believe that Buller won't let them be turned out of their cabins. He has a good man with him as Sec.—Col. Turner—who was *aide* to Aberdeen during the late Viceroyalty. Turner is a staunch Radical and Home Ruler who sympathizes with the poor, and we know very well that the brake has been put on against the local Bimbashis. They are cursing Buller heartily, and yesterday he had to issue an official contradiction of the undoubted truth that he is obstructing evictions by refusing police. There are more ways of killing a dog than choking him with butter. How they would storm against Liberals if any such officer were sent to Kerry to override the law, and how they denounced Morley for exercising the dispensing power, because of a few sympathetic sentences. What I am afraid of in all this is that the tenants nowhere are getting a clear receipt, and that they will afterwards be pressed for the balances unless there is an Arrears Act. Probably the Tories meditate muddling away the rest of the Church surplus in benefactions to the landlords to recompense their benevolence. Of course only the September rents are due yet, and September and March are much less frequent gale months with us than November and May. The November rents will be

soon demanded, and then we shall really know what the landlords will do. I think they will surrender, for if they don't they won't be paid. Every one of them is sick of the fight. Their retainers and bailiffs who made a profit out of evictions, and the attorneys who promoted them for the costs, have not been paid for a long time as they used long ago, and like a stranded vessel on the rocks it is only a question of the fierceness of the gale how soon the entire system will go to pieces. They were in much better blood for fighting in '81 and what have those of them got who stood out? Desolate farms that no one will touch, while the sight of emergency occupants no longer terrifies the tenants, who know that they are costing the master three times the rent and that their labours are as profitless as a locust's. These fellows are the riffraff of the towns who idle away their time in the next public-house or play cards with the police sent to protect them. They burn everything that will light for firing, and their occupation of the premises is about as husbandman-like as that of a party of Uhlans. Such is the prospect for the gentry who refuse abatements, and as they know the people have not got money, I believe they will make a virtue of necessity. Then the Government are known to be against them, and they cannot appeal from their own friends to the Liberals, so what are they to do? They distrust Churchill completely, and believe he is capable of anything. If, however, they hold out we shall have warm work. I have refrained from addressing agrarian meetings so far, though Dillon and O'Brien have gone on the warpath, because it is not clear to me yet what is the best line to take, and besides I think Parnell should give the note, so that nobody may get above concert pitch. What Parnell's views are I don't know, and he is the man on the horse. The consciousness of the people that they have Gladstone on their side would in any case, I think, take all the uglier sting out of the agitation, now that they feel a settlement to be only a matter of time. It is very hard for any one to advise them when the responsibility is directly on Parnell, but if he intervened popular opinion would blaze like a prairie fire.

Thanks for your enquiry about my return to the House. There are now three Irish vacancies, but I don't feel anxious to go in now that I am out of the hurly-burly. It is a heavy mone-

tary loss to me, still, if it seemed my duty, I would stand again. O'Brien hates Parliament and vows he won't go back, but if he would consent so should I. The English have no idea what a beastly nuisance it is, giving up your work in order to live in London, and then to be blackguarded as hirelings and assassins for our pains. I cannot think that there is much chance of turning out Randolph for a long time to come. Even if we could win over Chamberlain, he has few followers, and Hartington could still give the Ministry a majority. I think the pair of them are trying to kill Gladstone, and that this is quite as much a purpose of their policy as to prevent Home Rule. I feel sure that no modifications of the late Bill that we could agree to would induce either of them to come over.

In a Parliamentary sense Mr. Gladstone is a better life than Hartington, as when the Duke of Devonshire dies his influence will abate, and his followers in the House cannot be so well kept together. Joseph and he hate each other too much to agree on anything else than disagreeing with Gladstone, so that I cannot see any land ahead just yet. I fear there is nothing for it but to trust to the chapter of accidents. Cloture cannot, if carried, do us much harm. If used to promote coercion then you will have outrages and, for aught I know, dynamite once more in the ascendant, so that while they may get rid of the pain in one part of the system the disease will break out somewhere else. Every one here wants peace, and the wisdom of Gladstone's policy is more manifest to me every day. There is an entire change in the temper of the people, and it would even take some pretty rough Toryism to make them take to their old ways again.

If the present Government were wise they would take advantage of this frame of mind, but there is little prospect of their doing so.

In the monster demonstration which took place in Hyde Park, after the reading of the Coercion Bill for the first time, Mr. Labouchere had been one of the group of eloquent orators, including Mr. Michael Davitt, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Hunter, and Professor James Stuart, who, from a long semicircle of pavilions, had led upwards of a quarter million

demonstrators, poured out from the Radical Clubs and Associations of London, in protest against the tyrannical methods contemplated by the Government. A short extract from the speech of Mr. Baggallay, made in the House of Commons on April 14, gives an interesting little picture of Mr. Labouchere on the occasion of the demonstration: "I see the member for Northampton in his place," he said; "I am glad to see him back again after his short holiday, a holiday which I was sorry to see that he himself had cut short by unnecessarily making his appearance on a waggon in Hyde Park. May I be allowed to tell him that I was in Hyde Park also, although I was not in a waggon. I am prepared to admit that the crowd there was orderly. It has been asserted that there were a great many rowdies present. No doubt there were, but, for a Bank holiday, and for Hyde Park on a fine day, I think the congregation assembled there was fairly respectable. But, sir, what did they go there for? A great many were out for a holiday, but I believe that a very large number went there in order to see the leader of the Liberal party, or rather the real leader of the Radical party. I was asked over and over again, 'Where 's Labby?' There can be no doubt that the point of attraction was the platform at which the member for Northampton presided. The language Mr. Labouchere used in reference to this Coercion Bill was not perhaps quite so moderate as it might have been. He told his audience that the policy of the Government was like the ruffianism of Bill Sikes, and he added that if the Bill became law he hoped Irishmen would resist it." (Mr. Labouchere: "Hear, Hear!") "I do not know if Mr. Labouchere is prepared to repeat those words in the House—" (Mr. Labouchere: "Most unquestionably I repeat them.)"[1] And so on.

The protest had, of course, nothing but a moral value, minimised as much as possible by a slashing leading article in the *Times*, followed by a double dose of "Parnellism and

[1] *Hansard*, April 14, 1887, vol. 313.

Crime." But, in the September of that year, Mr. Labouchere, in company with four other members of Parliament (Mr. T. E. Ellis, Mr. Brunner, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. John O'Connor), went over to Ireland, in order to address the historic meeting at Michelstown.

Everybody knows the outline of what occurred—how the police, escorting a Government reporter, tried to force a passage through a hostile crowd to the speaker's platform, and how they were eventually driven back into their barracks, through the windows of which they fired at random, killing three men and mortally wounding two others. The meeting occurred on September 9, and on the 12th the matter was discussed during the debate in the House of Commons. Mr. Balfour pronounced instant and peremptory judgment, although his information on the subject must have been obtained with incredible rapidity.[1] He told the House that he was of opinion, "looking at the matter in the most impartial spirit, that the police were in no way to blame, and that no responsibility rested upon any one except upon those who convened the meeting under circumstances which they knew would lead to excitement and might lead to outrage."[2] Mr. Labouchere, following Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Balfour, made a characteristic speech, in the course of which he gave an inimitable account of what actually did happen at Michelstown.

"Now, sir," he said, "I was there. I was in a position which enabled me to see very clearly what took place. I am not a novice in these matters. I have been in a great many *émeutes* on the continent. I have been a reporter in some cases, and I have not only been in a position to see, but I have also been in the habit of chronicling what I did see. . . . We went down, and the train arrived at Fermoy. This is about fifteen miles from Michelstown, and when we were within a mile of the latter place, we were met by a

[1] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii.

[2] *Hansard*, September 12, 1887, vol. 321.

procession with flags and trumpets, and a certain crowd accompanying it. . . . We entered the town with this procession, and pulled up in the market-place. Michelstown is a very small provincial town with very wide streets and few of them. In the midst of the town there is this market-place, which is perhaps as large as Trafalgar Square. The market-place slopes, and at the top, is the main street of the village, and—I ask the House to remember this—there are two police barracks. One is the permanent police station . . . and the other a temporary police station, used by the police on this occasion, and faces the market-place. When we arrived there we got into a brake, which formed one part of the procession. This brake was mainly tenanted by priests, the Mayors of Cork and Clonmel, and a few other gentlemen. Mr. M'Carthy, a parish priest of the neighbourhood, was appointed chairman, and the crowd naturally gathered around. Mr. Dillon said to me: 'Let us cut this as short as possible: they will send the police and military into the town. They will attempt something, and something may occur if we go on long. I suggest we say a few words and ask the crowd to disperse.' I at once assented. Dillon then got up on the front side of the brake to say a few words, and at that time, or perhaps a few minutes before, I saw a body of police drawn up in a line in the lower part of the market-place. They had a reporter with them, and they pushed their way to within a short distance of the platform. . . . They could get no further. The people were so tightly packed. I will give an instance of this. When we got there we got out of our carriage, and we were all going on to the brake, which was, I suppose, five yards away. I was delayed a moment, and I was delayed at least two moments trying to get through these five yards, the people being so crowded that it was almost impossible to push through them. How then was it possible for the police, three abreast, without great violence, to push their way through such a dense mass as this? Our brake was at the top of the market-place,

the people were all in front. Why on earth did not the reporter go to the outside of the meeting, and down the other side? He could easily have got in that way, and we should have been glad to welcome him there. But the police deliberately tried to force their way right in front where the people were wedged in as much as possible. I then saw these dozen policemen, with the reporter in their midst, stop. I supposed then they were satisfied and saw they could get no further. Dillon made one or two observations, and then the police fell back, and I thought perhaps they were going round. Let me observe we did not see the Resident Magistrate at all. If the Resident Magistrate had shown himself, and said he wanted the reporter to pass, one would have let him pass. The difficulty was that the reporter did not come alone, but with this body of police. Dillon went on speaking, and the horsemen—not this wonderful regiment I see mentioned in the *Times*, but some twenty horsemen—closed round outside the meeting in order to hear. Suddenly, after the advance guard had fallen back, and joined the other police, they (the police) all rushed forward. I am told they came to where these horsemen were, and one of the policemen drew his sword, and wounded one of the horses. I believe Mr. Brunner saw this done. Immediately there was a scrimmage. . . . The police commenced and continued it. The next thing that happened was that the police ran away. Captain Seagrove may have been amongst them, but it appears he deserted them on this occasion, and went to a neighbouring inn on the right of the market-place. . . . The police ran into the barracks. . . . Brunner and Ellis got on the brake, and joined the Mayor of Cork in urging the people to clear the streets for fear of further bloodshed, and I remained on the brake, because I was anxious to see what would take place." He continued his speech, urging with great ability the futility of pursuing in Ireland such tactics, which amounted to nothing in the world but the forcing upon a weaker country

the tyranny of a stronger. "The Chief Secretary tells us," he continued, "that, by these means, he hopes to create a Union between England and Ireland. What sort of a Union does he expect to create? Does he expect to create a Union of hearts and affections? Does he hope to create an affection for the English Government? I am happy to see that in Ireland the people are making a wide distinction between the people of England and the Government of England. They know their troubles are only temporary, that a new alliance exists between the democracies of England and Ireland, and that the classes will not be able to hold their own against such an alliance. I hold that the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Balfour) is indirectly responsible for what has occurred at Michelstown, and that those who are directly responsible are R. M. Seagrove and Inspector Brownrigg. I accuse these men of gross and deliberate murder."[1]

After Mr. Labouchere sat down, there was really very little to be said on the other side. Lord Randolph Churchill, however, endeavoured to do his duty by his party, and commented thus on Labouchere's speech, craftily criticising its style and ignoring its substance: "And then, Sir, we had the statement of the member for Northampton, which seems to me to resemble in its nature certain newspapers which are now current, and, to some extent, popular in the metropolis, which convey their news to the public in paragraphs. The statement of the hon. gentleman did not seem to me to be altogether connected. It was really a series of paragraphs, which succeeded each other without much connection as far as I could make out. I put aside the statement of the hon. member for Northampton, because I have difficulty in regarding him as altogether serious in this matter."[2]

It is difficult to see why Lord Randolph Churchill did not regard Mr. Labouchere's statement on the subject as serious. Had he been commenting on Mr. Balfour's speech on the

[1] *Hansard*, September 12, 1887, vol. 321. [2] *Ibid.*

occasion, one might have understood a certain amount of scepticism as to the speaker's good faith.

In the following February Mr. Labouchere, in a speech on Mr. Parnell's amendment in answer to the Address from the Throne, referred again to Mr. Balfour's airy dismissal of any serious consideration of the Michelstown affray: "What the Chief Secretary had stated in the House about the matter was absolutely incorrect. He had always thought that the right hon. gentleman would be especially careful in matters of evidence, for, as a philosopher, he was his (Labouchere's) favourite philosopher. He had sat at the feet of that Gamaliel, he had read his *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, until he had almost doubted of his own existence. Yet, when the right hon. gentleman became Irish Chief Secretary, he forgot all his philosophy. The reason was that there were exigencies required of an Irish Secretary that were not to be found in the calm fields of philosophy. It was a melancholy thing for a philosopher to be plunged by the exigencies of his position into matters like this—to have vile instruments to carry out his orders, and to believe them or rather to pretend to believe them. . . ."[1]

The note of persiflage contained in all Labouchere's speeches on the Michelstown affair may have deceived his hearers as to the profoundness of his feelings of indignation, but his measured, well-considered utterances in *Truth* were for all who read them a sufficient guarantee of his good faith. Immediately after the affray, he wrote thus of the head of the constabulary force in Co. Cork: "I came across a person of the name of Brownrigg the other day. The ferocity, the insolence, the brutality of this man never were exceeded and rarely equalled by Cossack or Uhlan in a country occupied by Russian or German. I strongly recommend him for promotion. He is a man after the heart of our Tory despots, for he seemed to me to unite in his person every characteristic that goes to make up an official ruffian,

[1] *Hansard*, February 14, 1888, vol. 322.

armed with a little brief authority. On this man the responsibility of the Michelstown murders rests. He caused them, either deliberately, or from stupidity and brutality combined. If he has furnished Mr. Balfour with an account of what took place there, he adds to his other virtues the capacity of being one of the best liars that the world has ever produced, for the statement of Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons of the Michelstown affair, from 'official information,' is one long tissue of deliberate falsehoods."[1]

At the inquest which was held upon the victims, the jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against the chief police officer and five of his men. *Truth* pronounced as follows upon the inquest: "Immediately after the Michelstown meeting I had occasion to call attention to the conduct of Brownrigg, the chief of the constabulary there. This ruffian has given evidence, and his evidence is one long tissue of lies, so impudent that Mr. Irwin, the District Police Inspector, has borne testimony against him. When Mr. Irwin stated what the nature of his evidence must be, Brownrigg, it would appear, called his men together and tried to drill them into perjury, in order to obtain confirmation of his mendacity. I am not surprised at anything which this man may do, for I found him vain, irascible, insolent, and muddleheaded beyond all conception."

Mr. Labouchere's article, called "The Michelstown Murders," giving in more detail than he had been able to do in the House, the real facts of the affray, is a masterpiece of judicial summing up It is too long to quote in full, but the following extract will show how close was his reasoning, and how unanswerable his arguments:

> Three men were killed, and two were wounded. Two of the men killed received each two bullets. This proves two things: 1. That the police deliberately aimed. 2. That there could not have been a crowd. Never yet was a crowd fired into, and, of

[1] *Truth*, September 15, 1887.

the three men killed by the discharge, two each be struck twice. Any one can see that this is mathematically so improbable as to be impossible.

Station No. 1 is a house with an iron door, and iron shutters to the windows. Even if it had been attacked, an unarmed crowd could not have got into it; all the more as there were military within call ready to act, and Captain Seagrove was not in the station, and consequently could have at once called up the soldiers. It is admitted that there are 160 panes of glass in the windows, and that only six of these panes were broken by stones. The police therefore were not in danger of their lives, nor in any danger.[1]

The verdict of the inquest was afterwards quashed (Feb. 10, 1888) in the Queen's Bench on the ground that the coroner had perpetrated certain irregularities of form, and, as Lord Morley remarks, "the slaughter of the three men was finally left just as if it had been the slaughter of three dogs." No other incident of Irish administration stirred deeper feelings of disgust in Ireland, or of misgiving and indignation in England.[2] Meanwhile the *Times* articles "Parnellism and Crime" seemed to have been forgotten, except by Mr. Labouchere, who had in *Truth* chaffingly suggested to the *Times* the appointment of Mr. Brownrigg to write a few instalments of the sensational serial pamphlet. The poison, however, had worked, and goodwill towards Ireland had nearly died in English breasts. Parnell had declared in the House of Commons on the day of its publication that the facsimile letter was a clumsy fabrication. "Politics are come to a pretty pass," he said, "in this country when a leader of a party of eighty-six members has to stand up at ten minutes past one in the House of Commons in order to defend himself from an anonymous fabrication such as that which is contained in the *Times* of this morning."[3]

[1] *Truth*, September 22, 1887.
[2] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii.
[3] *Hansard*, April 18, 1887, vol. 313.

Nobody except his Radical friends believed him, and the affair would probably have sunk into oblivion if a former member of the party, a Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, had not, after mature reflection, conceived that he had been libelled in the famous articles. In the summer of 1888 he prosecuted the *Times* for damages, and lost his case, for, as a matter of fact, Mr. O'Donnell had not been mentioned in the articles, and it almost appeared that something like a guilty conscience had prompted him to bring the action. But the prosecuting counsel's method of presenting the case not only compelled Sir Richard Webster to reproduce and exhaustively comment upon the "Parnellism and Crime" articles, but furnished him with the opportunity of startling London and the world with a long series of other letters, some of them more damning even than the facsimile letter, five purporting to be from Pat. Egan, the former treasurer of the Land League, addressed to various agitators and felons including James Carey, the informer, and three supposed to be from Parnell. It is only necessary to this narrative to quote one which was read out on July 4, 1888, by the Attorney-General in his address to the jury. It ran as follows:

9/1/82.

DEAR E.,—What are these fellows waiting for? This inaction is inexcusable, our best men are in prison and nothing is being done. Let there be an end of this hesitancy. Prompt action is called for. You undertook to make it hot for old Forster and Co. Let us have some evidence of your power to do so. My health is good, thanks.—Yours very truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

"Dear E." meant Patrick Egan. In January, four months before the Phœnix Park murders, Mr. Parnell was in Kilmainham Prison. Well might the Attorney-General say, as he solemnly read out the letter in Court: "If it was signed by Mr. Parnell, I need not comment upon it."

He also made the announcement that the "facsimile letter," as the first one published in the *Times* has always been called, as well as the ones he had produced in Court that day, had been for some time in the possession of the *Times*. Presumably the *Times* had kept them in the hopes that the Irish leaders would sooner or later bring an action for libel against the paper, when they would triumphantly have produced the letters and so confounded the whole party. As it turned out, their production at that moment rather resembled the killing of a fly with a sledge-hammer, for Mr. O'Donnell's case was one of such palpable insignificance. An important reason may be mentioned here, for explaining what may seem to be an extraordinary lack of initiative on Mr. Parnell's part. He had not been willing to prosecute the *Times* because he was firmly convinced that Captain O'Shea had been concerned in the production of the letters, and, to add to his unwillingness, his friends in England had pointed out to him the immense improbability of a jury of twelve Middlesex men, being, at that moment, sufficiently without racial prejudice, to pronounce a verdict in his favour. After the Attorney-General's declaration that the *Times* would retract nothing, and the implied challenge in his admission that, if false, no grosser libels were ever written, Mr. Parnell took action. On the day of the delivery of the verdict in the case of O'Donnell *v.* Walter, he formally denied the authenticity of the letters, and asked for a Select Committee of the House to enquire into the matter. His request was refused, but finally it was suggested from the Treasury Bench that the enquiry should be entrusted to a Commission of Judges appointed by Act of Parliament. A Bill embodying this suggestion was read for the second time on July 24, and the names of the Commissioners were added in the Committee stage. Sir James Hannen was chosen as President of the Commission, and with him were associated Sir Charles Day, an Orangeman, and Sir Archibald Levin Smith. Mr. H. Cunynghame, a junior barrister (now Sir

Henry Cunynghame), was appointed Secretary to the Commission.[1]

Mr. Labouchere had, of course, scented in the whole business a chapter of *chroniques scandaleuses* after his own heart. He set to work to study it at once *con amore*, and very soon came to the conclusion that all the letters had been forged by one Richard Pigott, the story of whose chequered career was soon to become the property of a marvelling public. "Immediately on the Egan letters being produced in the O'Donnell *v.* Walter case," he writes in his own account of the affair, "Mr. Egan telegraphed to me that he was sending over Carey's letters to him. (Mr. Egan was then in America.) These letters followed. They referred to a municipal election, and, being written at the same time as a forged letter of Mr. Egan to Carey, they proved conclusively that the latter could not be genuine. Whilst the discussion was taking place in Parliament about the Royal Commission, Mr. Egan again telegraphed that he had been comparing the letters ascribed to him in the O'Donnell trial with the drafts of certain letters which he had written to Pigott about the purchase of the *Irishman*,[2] and the letters ascribed to Mr. Parnell, with the copies of two letters written by that gentleman to Pigott in relation to the sale, which copies were in his (Egan's) possession. He said that he had found such a similarity of phrase in the genuine letters and in the forged letters that he was certain that the latter were fabricated from the former. An emissary soon after came over with the Egan drafts and with Pigott's letters (one of which contained that blessed word 'hesitancy'), to which the former were replies, and with the copies of Mr. Parnell's letters. One of the drafts had been

[1] The Counsel for the *Times* were Sir Richard Webster, the Attorney-General, Sir Henry James, Mr. Murphy, Mr. W. Graham, Mr. Atkinson, and Mr. Ronan; Sir Charles Russell and Mr. Asquith, M.P., appeared for Mr. Parnell.

[2] The *Irishman* was a Fenian newspaper owned by Pigott, and sold by him to Parnell in 1881.

published previously as a part of a correspondence between Egan and Pigott in the *Freeman's Journal*, and the copies of Mr. Parnell's letters were in the handwriting of Mr. Campbell.[1] Now it was utterly impossible that the similarities, amounting in one case to three consecutive lines, could be a mere chance. It was, therefore, a mathematical certainty that Pigott had forged the letters, while it was obvious that Mr. Egan's drafts were genuine, for they could have been at once disproved, if incorrect, by Pigott producing, at the investigation, the original of them, which, it was to be presumed, he had in his possession. I showed the Carey letters to Mr. Parnell alone, and the Egan correspondence with Pigott to Sir Charles Russell and Mr. Parnell alone, and then locked them up. On Mr. George Lewis being retained, I handed them over to him, and he proceeded to get up Pigott's 'record,' only a portion of which came before the Court, but a portion amply sufficient to show that he had lived for years on blackmailing, forgery, and treachery."[2]

Mr. Labouchere then went off to Germany for his summer holiday, and, while abroad, a chance conversation revealed to him that the incriminating letters had been already shown by Mr. Houston, the Secretary of the Loyal and Patriotic Association, to Lord Hartington. Houston was therefore immediately subpœnaed, and it later transpired that he had offered them to the *Pall Mall Gazette* before he sold them to the *Times*. "Two facts were consequently certain," said Mr. Labouchere. "Houston had sold the letters, and Pigott had forged them. Although we were ourselves certain of the latter fact, it was possible that, as we had only the drafts of the Egan letters, it might be said (as indeed it was said, by Pigott in the witness-box) that Egan had written his drafts from the *Times* letters, instead of the *Times* letters having been fabricated from the Egan letters.

"About the middle of October," continued Mr. Labouchere, "Mr. Egan sent over here a trusty emissary, with

[1] Mr. Parnell's secretary. [2] *Truth*.

orders to report to me, and to see whether it would not be possible to buy of Pigott the original of the Egan drafts, for he knew his man, and believed (rightly) that he would have no objection to sell anything that he possessed for a consideration. I sent this emissary to Kingstown, where Pigott was residing. The emissary told him that Egan wanted these originals. Pigott declined to deal with the emissary, and said that he must be put in communication with some one whom he could trust. On this I told the emissary that Pigott could see me at my house on a certain evening. I went down to the Commission which was sitting on that day, and informed Mr. Parnell and Mr. Lewis of what had been arranged. It was agreed that they should both be present."

Mr. Labouchere's letter to Pigott making the appointment for this interview has, with its hint to come "by the underground," been so often referred to that it is worth while giving it here in full:

24 Grosvenor Gardens, S. W., Oct. 25, 1888.

Dear Sir,—I shall be here at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning, and shall be happy to see you for a confidential conversation, which, as you say, can do no harm, if it does no good. I will return you your letter when you come. I think this house would be the best place, for it certainly is not watched, and it would be as easy to throw off any one coming here as going elsewhere. Your best plan would be, I should think, to take the underground, and get out at Victoria Station. The house is close by.—Yours faithfully,

H. Labouchere.

It may be mentioned in parenthesis that Mr. Labouchere had misdated his letter. It was really written, as was proved by the postmark on the envelope, on October 24, and the interview took place on that evening at 10 o'clock, as he changed the time of the appointment by telegram.

Both Mr. Labouchere and Pigott were very well aware

that 24 Grosvenor Gardens, if not being watched at the moment when the above letter was penned, would be so as soon as Pigott was inside it, for the unhappy forger was dogged in all his footsteps by the *Times* agents. Mr. Labouchere had, however, nothing to fear, and poor Pigott had very little to lose, and a vague expectation of something to gain. The upshot of the interview was that, in the presence of Mr. Parnell and Mr. Lewis, Pigott confessed that he had forged the letters and suggested that he would give a full confession, and write to the Attorney-General and to the *Times* that he was the forger, if Mr. Lewis would withdraw his subpœna and let him go to Australia. But it was not Pigott's confession that Mr. Lewis and Mr. Labouchere wanted. It was the originals of the drafts of the Egan letters. Mr. Parnell and Mr. Labouchere withdrew to another room, leaving Mr. Lewis to do what he could with the slippery Richard. "Soon," to continue the narrative in Mr. Labouchere's own words, "Mr. Lewis came into the dining-room, and said to me, 'Pigott wants to come to me to-morrow and give me a full statement He is going away and wants to speak to you'; adding, 'Mind, whatever you do, don't give him any money; if you do he will bolt.' I left Mr. Lewis with Mr. Parnell, and went back to Pigott.

"That worthy at once came to business, and said that the *Times* had promised him £5000 to go into the box, and asked what I would give for him not to do so. I replied that I would give nothing, but that Egan's emissary had already told him that, acting for Egan, I wanted the original of the Egan drafts, as these would prove the forgery up to the hilt, and that if he had them and they were satisfactory, I would pay for them He asked whether I would give £5000 for them. When I declined, he asked whether I would give £1000. I said it would be more like one thousand than five, but that I must first see the documents. I then asked whether the signature of the Parnell letters, which is at the top of a page, was forged, or whether it was an autograph which had

fallen into his hands, and he had written the letter on the other side. 'Why do you want to know this?' he asked. 'Mere curiosity,' I replied. On which he said that it was forged. He then left."

Nothing definite as to the original Egan letters was obtained by Mr. Lewis when he called the next day, and neither did he obtain the promised statement. The interview with Messrs. Labouchere, Lewis, and Parnell at Grosvenor Gardens, and the subsequent private one with Mr. Lewis, were reported to the *Times* agents by Pigott with a fanciful account of what took place at each. He shortly afterwards returned to Ireland, and Mr. Labouchere continued his efforts to procure all possible evidence on behalf of his Irish friends. He was considerably helped by his acquaintances in America, who were able to furnish him with invaluable details and scraps of knowledge about the various witnesses for the *Times*, which came in appositely more than once in Sir Charles Russell's masterly cross-examinations. It is interesting to notice, in perusing many of the curious letters received by Mr. Labouchere at this period from Irish patriots living beyond the Atlantic (what Mr. Labouchere had so often heard from the lips of Mr. Parnell himself),[1] how far from popular Parnell was with most of them. He was too meek and mild for them, and they could not understand his patience under injury and abuse. In one of these letters occurs the following anecdote about the intrepid Irish leader: "I want to tell you," says the writer, "something about Parnell in 1883—ask him: two men called on him when he was in Cork and said (recollect the two were extremists), 'Mr. Parnell, unless you give us £1000 for extreme measures we will shoot you before we leave Cork.' Parnell simply replied, 'Well, I certainly have a choice, for which I am obliged—to be shot now or to be hung afterwards. I prefer the former. You will never get £1000 from me for the purpose you mention.' " One and all of these patriots,

[1] See letters to Chamberlain in Chapter IX.

however, at this crisis of Parnell's career were determined to uphold him, and to allow whatever grievances they had against him to stand over until after his political character had been vindicated in the eyes of the hated English.

Mr. Labouchere remained in communication with Pigott throughout the winter. Pigott dangled before him the possibility of further important communications, and on November 29 Mr. Labouchere wrote to him as follows:

As I understand the position it is this—Mr. Lewis holds that we can prove our case against the *Times* in regard to the letters conclusively, and this, you will remember, Mr. Parnell told you. We prove it in a certain way. You say that you wish to be kept out of it, and not be called as a witness. If such a course can strengthen our case, and prove it still more conclusively, I do not see why it should not be adopted, for the object is to prove irrespective of individuals. Evidently, some one must know how you propose to do what you want, and what you say you can do. If you like to confide in me, I will tell you what I think, and, if I agree with you, it will be then time for you either to assent or dissent to Mr. Parnell or Mr. Lewis being informed. But you are a practical man—so am I. Mere assertion, neither you nor I attach much importance to, without documentary or some other clear confirmation.

Pigott answered as follows:

Anderton's Hotel,
Fleet Street, E. C., Dec. 4, 1888.

Dear Sir,—I have arrived here, and write a line to ask you to make an appointment, as I know that your house is watched—as is also Mr. Lewis's Office—and as I am "shadowed" wherever I go outside a certain limit, perhaps you could kindly arrange that we should meet somewhere else to-morrow afternoon or Thursday, or in fact any other day you choose.—Faithfuly yours, Rd. Piggott.

What occurred at the meeting which took place as the result of the above correspondence is best told in Mr.

Labouchere's own words: "Pigott came about ten and stayed till one A.M. Again he explained that he had forged, and gave me a good many details about the way in which he had done it, telling me, amongst other things, that he had given Houston three names as the sources of the letters, two of which were efforts of his imagination, and the third a real person. He seemed rather proud of his skill, and by encouraging this weakness I got everything out of him. I asked him how Houston could have been so easily fooled, and whether he was an absolute idiot? He replied that he was clever up to a certain point, but thought himself twice as clever as he was, and that these sort of persons are easily trapped. In this I agreed with him, and he told me that Houston had told him that he wanted letters, because it was intended to publish a pamphlet, and that the letters were to be held in reserve to be sprung upon the Court if there was an action for libel, adding that such an action would be certain not to be brought. Again and again, with weary iteration, he came back to his plan to confess in writing, and then to go to Australia. I told him that he surely must be sharp enough to see to what accusations this would subject me, and how hurtful it would be to our case, which I assured him was of such strength that it would smash him, quite irrespective of anything he might say or do. 'Why, then, do you want documents?' he said. 'Because,' I replied, 'the issue is a political one. We have to deal with prejudiced Tories who have already compromised themselves by pinning themselves to the genuineness of the letters, and consequently our case cannot be too much strengthened. With such people you must put butter upon bacon.' 'What documents do you want?' he said. 'Egan's letters, the original signatures from which you traced those of Egan and Parnell, and a few letters forged in my presence,' I said. 'I have not got Egan's letters: I destroyed them. I have not got the signatures. I gave Houston the letter of Parnell from which I took his signature. I will, if you like, forge the letters in

your presence. I will give you the names of the three men from whom I told Houston I got the letters, and I will give you the letters that Houston wrote to me,' he answered. I said that I would not give sixpence for these without the two items that I had mentioned, and he reiterated that he had not got them. 'Why,' I suddenly said to him, 'did you write to Archbishop Walsh about the letters?' 'The Archbishop,' he replied, 'has not got my letters; he sent them all back; to reveal anything concerning them would be to violate the confidence between a priest and a penitent.' 'Well,' I finished by saying, 'think it over. I am going out of town. When I return, come and see me again, and in the meanwhile try and find the originals of Egan's letters. I will let you know when I come back.' He said that he would think it over, and, on wishing him good-night, I asked him what he contemplated doing? He said that he was in a terrible mess, but that he saw no other course open for him but to go into the box and swear that he had bought the letters, and that if they were forgeries he had been deceived. 'You will be a fool if you do,' I said, 'but that is your affair, not mine. If I were in your place I should tell the truth, and ask for the indemnity.' 'That is all very well,' he said, 'but on what am I to live?' And so we parted." Mr. Labouchere did not see Pigott again until he saw him in the witness-box more than two months later. Pigott returned to Ireland about the middle of December and the Commission adjourned until January 15. Patrick Egan had written to Mr. Labouchere on December 2 from Lincoln, Massachusetts saying: "I hope you will be able to squeeze the truth out of Pigott in the way you say, as I should dislike terribly to see him profit in any way by his villainy. I do not believe there is a single thing in the suspicion against O'Shea. . . . The fellow is incapable of playing the rôle of heavy villain. I am quite convinced that the forgery part of the scheme was the sole work of Pigott. You will perceive that all your injunctions with regard to secrecy have been

observed on this side, but everything gets out from London and Dublin. Yesterday we had on one of our Lincoln evening papers a cable (probably a copy of a New York Herald cable) giving all particulars about the watch that is being kept on Pigott and the discovery that C. is doing detective work for the *Times*, that F. was mixed up with the forgeries and other matters."

It must be borne in mind that, when the Commission adjourned in the middle of December, the all-important question of the letters had not yet been touched upon. "The objects of the accusers," says Lord Morley, "was to show the complicity of the accused with crime by tracing crime to the League, and making every member of the League constructively liable for every act of which the League was constructively guilty. Witnesses were produced, in a series that seemed interminable, to tell the story of five-and-twenty outrages in Mayo, of as many in Cork, of forty-two in Galway, of sixty-five in Kerry, one after another, and all with immeasurable detail. Some of the witnesses spoke no English, and the English of others was hardly more intelligible than Erse. Long extracts were read out from four hundred and forty speeches. The counsel on one side produced a passage that made against the Speaker, and then the counsel on the other side found and read some qualifying passage that made as strongly for him. The three judges groaned. They had already, they said plaintively, ploughed through the speeches in the solitude of their own rooms. Could they not be taken as read? 'No,' said the prosecuting counsel, 'we are building up an argument, and it cannot be built up in a silent manner.' In truth it was designed for the public outside the court, and not a touch was spared that might deepen the odium. Week after week the ugly tale went on—a squalid ogre let loose among a population demoralised by ages of wicked neglect, misery, and oppression. One side strove to show that the ogre had been wantonly raised by the Land League for political objects of their own; the other, that it was the

progeny of distress and wrong, that the League had rather controlled than kindled its ferocity, and that crime and outrage were due to local animosities for which neither League nor parliamentary leaders were responsible."[1] The Nationalists were impatient for the real business to begin, for it was felt by every one that, if the letters were proved to be genuine, the case was practically won all round for the *Times*, whereas, if they proved to be forgeries, public opinion on the subject could have but one bias. Indeed, Mr. Chamberlain himself had said: "To lead the inquiry off into subsidiary and unimportant matters would be . . . fatal to the reputation of the *Times*—fatal to its success." And again, "If the *Times* fails to maintain its principal charges, I do not think much attention will be attached to other charges. Any attempt, as it appears to all, on the part of the *Times* to put aside those principal charges or not to put them in the forefront will redound to their discredit."[2] The delay, however, gave this advantage to the Nationalist side—they had more time in which to accumulate confirmatory evidence against the forger, and the forger was given more time in which to further involve himself, in the net which his fowler had spread for him, by writing foolish letters and telling needless lies. Pigott had promised Mr. Labouchere to return to London whenever he sent for him. Parnell wrote to Mr. Labouchere during the Christmas vacation of the Commissioners:

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Jan. 14, 1889.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—I am anxious to see you before your Irish friend returns to London. Kindly give me an appointment, and let it be if possible after four o'clock.—Yours sincerely,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

[1] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii.
[2] Macdonald, *Diary of the Parnell Commission*, July 6, 1887.

He wrote again as follows on the 21st:

I do not think you need send for your Dublin friend this time, as the *Times* will probably do that for you, and you will hear when he is in London. Another forged letter of Egan's was produced in Court last week, and sworn to by Delaney, evidently one of the Pigott series. I am laid up with a cold, but hope to be out to-morrow, when I will try and call to see you in the afternoon.—Yours very truly, CHAS. S. PARNELL.

The Irish friend was, of course, Pigott, and Delaney was a convict—a witness for the *Times*. He was one of the Phœnix Park criminals, and was described by the *Daily News* reporter, present in court, as of "over middle height, stoutish in build, reddish-yellow haired, and with features which were more of a Russian than an Irish cast. He wore a short jacket of check tweed, and a big white cravat about his neck." He had been brought up from Maryborough prison, where he was doing his life sentence. His brother was hanged for the Phœnix Park murders, and so would he have been himself if he had not confessed, and, in consequence, had his sentence changed from execution to penal servitude for life. He had sworn to the handwriting of Patrick Egan on one of the letters produced in court. "Are you an expert?" asked Sir Charles Russell carelessly. No, Mr. Delaney was not an expert, but he remembered the signature after so many years, and he identified it when he was shown it "yesterday evening" by the *Times* agent. He was able to identify it because Carey, seven or eight years ago, showed him three of Mr. Egan's letters.[1]

Pigott had been subpœnaed by the *Times* as a witness early in December. On January 24, Mr. Labouchere wrote to him saying: "I see that Sir R. Webster talks about soon getting to the letters. When are you likely to be over? If you wish it, I will send your expenses to come over." At the end of the month he sent Pigott £10. Labouchere's letter and the

[1] Macdonald, *Diary of the Parnell Commission.*

£10 note were confided at once by Pigott to Mr. Houston, who handed them over to Mr. Soames, and, of course, they were produced in court and a rather different interpretation put upon them to the one the recipient knew was warranted.

Pigott was not called into the witness-box, the ordeal which he so justly dreaded, until the fifty-fourth day of the Commission's sittings. He at once gave an account of the way he had obtained the first batch of incriminating letters. It read like a romance, as indeed, it was in every sense of the word—how Mr. Houston had begged him, if possible, to find some authentic documents to substantiate accusations against the Irish leaders, how he had set forth for Lausanne, all his expenses handsomely paid, and had met there an old friend who had told him about a letter written by Parnell which was in Paris, and might be obtained; how he had then proceeded to Paris and by a marvellous stroke of good luck had run up against an Irishman in the street who was able to give him more details about the Parnell letter, and other documents of a similar kind, which had been found in a black bag in a Paris lodging-house. He had not immediately bought the bag and its contents, because there were many difficulties in the way, but he had gone back to London and told Mr. Houston the whole story, and returned to Paris ready to clinch the bargain. But the Irish friend was not easy to bring to terms. He said Pigott must, before he could get possession of the letters, go to America and obtain the permission to buy them from the Fenians there. To America he accordingly went, and returned with a letter from John Breslin to the Irish friend authorising the sale of the Parnell letter (afterwards known as the "facsimile letter") and the rest of the papers. Houston came over to Paris and paid him £500 for the contents of the black bag, and gave him £105 for his own trouble. It must be remembered that all his travelling expenses had been paid, as well as £1 a day for hotels—not a bad remuneration for a needy man such as Pigott was, who, it turned out later, was making what living

he could by the sale of indecent photographs and books to all who cared to buy them. Doubtless the black bag was useful to him in his book and picture business, which was why he did not sell it with its temporary contents to Mr. Houston. The said contents, as bought by Houston, were as follows: Five letters of Mr. Parnell's, six of Patrick Egan's, some scraps of paper, and the torn-out leaves of an old account-book. The black bag was supposed to have been left in Paris by an Irish patriot (Frank Byrne or James O'Kelly) and had been taken possession of by the Clan-na-Gael. Subsequently two other batches of letters were obtained by Pigott in Paris, and likewise sold to the *Times*.

The Attorney-General, in the course of his examination of Pigott, drew from him the following remarkable account of his visit to Mr. Labouchere's house on October 24:

The Attorney-General. Tell us, as nearly as you can, what passed between you, Mr. Labouchere, and Mr. Parnell, and if, at any part of it, Mr. Parnell was not present, just tell us and draw the distinction—what passed as nearly as you can: how did the conversation begin?

Pigott. I think, as well as I recollect, Mr. Parnell commenced the conversation, and what he said was to the effect that they held proofs in their hands that would convict me of the forgery of all the letters, and he asked me, with reference to my statement to the effect that I wished if possible to avoid giving evidence at all, how I proposed to do that. I explained that I had not been subpœnaed by the *Times* up to that date, that the only subpœna I received was the one Mr. Lewis had served me with, and it occurred to me then that probably, if I could induce Mr. Lewis to withdraw his subpœna, I might avoid in that way coming forward at all. Mr. Parnell was of opinion that that could not be done, that Mr. Lewis could not withdraw his subpœna, that I would be obliged to appear. Then, I think, Mr. Labouchere took up the running, and he was rather facetious.

The Attorney-General. What did he say, please?

Pigott. He made a proposition to me right out, that I should

appear in the witness-box and swear that I had forged the letters, thereby ensuing—entitling myself to receive from the Commissioners a certificate of immunity from any proceedings, legal or criminal. He said that was his reading of the law, and Mr. Parnell agreed with him that such was the case, that it was an extremely simple matter; it was merely going into the box, taking an oath, and walking out free.

The Attorney-General. I want just to get this: did the suggestion that if you went into the witness-box, and said that you forged the letters, that you would get your certificate, come from Mr. Labouchere?

Pigott. Distinctly.

The Attorney-General. What else, please?

Pigott. He urged me, as a further inducement to do this, that I would become immensely popular in Ireland, the fact that I had swindled the *Times* would be sufficient of itself to secure me a seat in Parliament to begin with, and then, if at any time I wished to go to the United States, he would undertake that I should be received with a torchlight procession from all the organisations there. Of course, I could scarcely believe that he was serious, but still——[1]

Here almost uncontrolled merriment burst out all over the court, in which Mr. Labouchere himself joined more heartily than any one.

The President of the Court. I must say, whether this is true or not, it is not a fit subject for laughter.

But whether the President would or no, it was impossible to prevent constant ripples of laughter from breaking out all over the court while Pigott was narrating his version of the first meeting at Mr. Labouchere's house. Pigott told how Mr. Lewis had arrived on the scene, and had also denounced him as the forger of the letters—"Mr. Lewis assumed his severest manner," said Pigott. He continued his evidence after some further questions from the Attorney-General.

[1] *Special Commission Act*, 1888, vol. v.

Pigott. Mr. Labouchere beckoned me outside the door into the hall, and he there said—I forgot to mention that in the course of conversation I stated that I had—I do not know exactly whether I said I had been promised £5000 by the *Times* or that I had demanded it.

The Attorney-General. One or the other?

Pigott. One or the other. So referring to that Mr. Labouchere said that they were prepared to pay me £1000—that he himself was prepared to pay me £1000, but, of course, I was not to mention anything about it to Mr. Parnell or to Mr. Lewis.

The President. One moment before you go further. "He beckoned me outside"—where was he then?

Pigott. That was at Labouchere's house.

The President. I know, but where was it?

Pigott. Outside into the hall.

The President. Was it a whole house or was it a flat?

Pigott. It is a whole house. He took me into the entrance hall, the room that we were in was the front room.

The President. A dining-room or library or what?

Pigott. A library.

The Attorney-General. Is that the end of the conversation that then took place?

Pigott. Up to that time, yes.

The Attorney-General. What did you say to Mr. Labouchere when he said he was prepared to pay you £1000?

Pigott. I said I thought it was a very handsome sum; I did not say whether I would take it or not. As well as I can recollect, however, I raised no objection. I took it that he understood me to agree to that sum. Then, on returning to the room, I said distinctly—very distinctly—that nothing under heaven would induce me to go into the witness-box and swear a lie—nothing would. Then Mr. Lewis explained to me the necessity for my going into the witness-box might be avoided by the course that he suggested: that is that I was to write to the *Times* to state that I believed the letters were forgeries, or that I had forged them myself, if I preferred it. At all events I was to acquaint the Manager of the *Times* with the fact that the letters were actual forgeries, and that thereupon the *Times* would naturally withdraw the letters, and the thing would drop, and of course Mr. Labou-

chere's offer would stand. Well, Mr. Lewis did not say that, but of course I understood it.

Pigott proceeded to give his account of his interview with Mr. Lewis on the following morning. He said that Mr. Lewis had taken notes of what he (Pigott) said, and he (Pigott) had told Mr. Lewis all he had told Mr. Soames with reference to the hunt for and discovery of the incriminating letters in Paris. Mr. Soames's evidence, given in court on February 15, of what Pigott had told him on this subject differed very considerably from what, according to Mr. Lewis's notes, he had told the latter. For instance, Mr. Pigott told Mr. Lewis on October 25 that he had sold the letters to Mr. Houston, never believing for a moment himself that they were genuine. In court, on February 21, Pigott denied the accuracy of Mr. Lewis's notes, made during his conversation with him at Anderton's Hotel on October 25.

All Pigott's correspondence with Mr. Lewis and Mr. Labouchere was then read out in court, with the replies of the two gentlemen to Mr. Pigott. The Attorney-General ended his examination as follows:

The Attorney-General. The only other matter I want to put to you is this: these gentlemen told you—Mr. Parnell and Mr. Labouchere—that they had copies of letters, which they had written to you?

Pigott. Yes.

The Attorney-General. From which it was alleged that you had copied these documents?

Pigott. Yes.

The Attorney-General. Did they produce any to you?

Pigott. No.

The Attorney-General. Did they at any time, either at Mr. Lewis's office or at Mr. Labouchere's, offer to show you any of them?

Pigott. No.

As the Attorney-General, rearranging his gown, was

slowly resuming his seat, a loud murmur of conversation broke out over the court. It stopped suddenly. Scarcely was the Attorney-General seated when Sir Charles Russell stood bolt upright. He had a clean sheet of paper in his hand. There was such a silence in the court that even the fall of a pin would have been heard. Pigott's little day of peace was over. Poor fellow! He had done his best to keep his share of the business in the black shadows where such deeds are wont to skulk, but the gloom was about to be dispelled by the light of truth.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COLLAPSE OF RICHARD PIGOTT

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL'S cross-examination of Pigott on the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth days of the Commission's sittings is generally considered to be one of the finest things of the kind, from a technical point of view, ever heard. A friend who was much with him at that time relates that, on the day the cross-examination commenced, he was irritable and depressed and unable to eat, and that he could not have been more nervous had he been a junior with his first brief instead of the most formidable advocate at the Bar. But, as he stood facing the forger, his whole appearance changed. He was a picture of calmness, self-possession, and strength, there was no sign of impatience or irritability, not a trace of anxiety or care.[1] In the profound silence that had fallen upon the court he began, in tones of great courtesy:

Mr. Pigott, would you be good enough, with my Lord's permission, to write some words on that sheet of paper for me. Perhaps you will sit down in order to do it. [He gave him the sheet of paper he had in his hand.] Would you like to sit down?

Pigott. Oh no, thanks.

The President. Well, but I think that it is better that you should sit down. Here is a table upon which you can write in the ordinary way, the course you always pursue.

Sir Charles Russell. Will you write the word "livelihood"?

[1] Barry O'Brien, *Life of Lord Russell of Killowen.*

Just leave a space. Will you write the word "likelihood"? Will you write your own name, leaving a space between each? Will you write the word "proselytism," and finally, I think I will not trouble you any more at present, "Patrick Egan" and "P. Egan" underneath it—"Patrick Egan" first and "P. Egan" underneath it? There is one word more I had forgotten. Lower down, please, leaving spaces, write the word "hesitancy" with a small "h."

Pigott, after he had written what he was told, handed back the sheet of paper, and, as soon as Sir Charles Russell had glanced at it, he knew that he had scored a great point for Mr. Parnell. The word that he had told Pigott to write last, and with a small "h," as if that were the significant part of the experiment, was the word which Pigott had misspelt in one of the letters supposed to be from Parnell to Egan which the Attorney-General had produced at the O'Donnell *v.* Walter trial. Pigott had again spelt it wrong. Hesitancy on the piece of paper which he handed back to Sir Charles Russell was spelt "hesitency."

The cross-examination of Pigott occupied the rest of that day, and before the end of it the wretched man had fallen into hopeless confusion. The production of some of his correspondence with the Archbishop of Dublin (Dr. Walsh), in which he offered, for a consideration of course, to avert the possibility of a blow which was about to fall upon the Nationalist party (presumably the publication of the fac-simile letter), almost finished his brazen self-command. The day's sitting ended in a roar of laughter, for Pigott's silly, aimless reflections, elicited by the advocate's remorseless, persistent questions, were ludicrous, and it was easy to see what the climax of the affair would be. The next day things went worse and worse for Pigott. A correspondence which he had with Egan in 1881 was produced, in which he had misspelt the word "hesitancy" as he had done the day before in court. Egan's answers to Pigott were not forthcoming, for reasons which the forger made known later on, but the

drafts of these answers, produced by Mr. Lewis (who had got them direct from Mr. Egan through Mr. Labouchere), bearing a remarkable similarity to the Egan letters produced by the *Times*, were read by Sir Charles Russell. Copies of letters written by Mr. Parnell to Pigott in 1881 were also read out, coinciding word for word in parts with the "fac-simile letter" and the others put in by the accusers of the Nationalist party. Then Pigott was made to acknowledge how he had blackmailed Mr. Forster, and Mr. Wemyss Reid produced the Pigott–Forster correspondence in court. Before the reading of this correspondence was finished, the densely packed audience in the court, according to the *Daily News* reporter, was wrought up to the highest pitch of amusement and excitement. The court usher had long since ceased to cry out "Silence!" The merriment was almost continuous. The judges themselves were unable to repress their feelings. A loud ringing roar of laughter broke forth as Sir Charles Russell read one letter containing Pigott's application for £200 to enable him to proceed to Sydney, and some hints as to the pressure which was brought to bear upon him to publish the Forster letters. Mr. Justice Day, bending forward, reddened and shook with laughter. In this letter Pigott wrote: "I feel this is my last chance, and if that fails only the workhouse and the grave remains." Poor Pigott looked as if he would prefer even the grave to the witness-box. He changed colour; the helpless, foolish smile flickered about the weak heavy mouth; his hands moved about restlessly, nervously. Then came the climax—Pigott's letter to Mr. Forster, saying that he felt tempted to reveal to the world how he had been bribed by Mr. Forster to write against the interests of Ireland. The notion of Pigott's appearing in the character of injured innocence sent the audience off once more into a fit of laughter. It was now four o'clock, and, in the uproar and confusion, Pigott descended from the box, smiling foolishly.[1] That he had forged

[1] Macdonald, *Diary of the Parnell Commission.*

the letters no one now doubted for a moment. The way he had actually done it was not yet absolutely clear, but the ingenuous Pigott was not going to leave any mysteries unsolved. The court was adjourned until the following Tuesday.

The story of how the court met on February 26, and when Pigott was called upon to enter the witness-box there was no answer, and how it was subsequently elicited that he had disappeared from his hotel on the previous afternoon and not been seen again, has been graphically told by more than one writer. Who had given him the money to bolt, and who had assisted him to evade the constables who were supposed to be watching him, has never been positively revealed, but the fact remained—there was no Pigott there to tell the end of his squalid tale. The court adjourned for some thirty minutes, and then Sir Charles Russell made the startling announcement that Pigott, without an invitation from any one, had called upon Mr. Labouchere in Grosvenor Gardens on the previous Saturday, the day after his disastrous cross-examination, and had then and there dictated to him a full confession. This confession had been signed by Pigott and witnessed by Mr. George Augustus Sala. Mr. George Lewis, to whom Mr. Labouchere had communicated the confession, had refused to have anything to do with the document, and sent it back to Pigott with the following letter:

Ely Place, Holborn, Feb. 25, 1889.

Sir,—Mr. Labouchere has informed me that on Saturday you called at his house and expressed a desire to make a statement in writing, and he has handed to us the confession you have made, that you are the forger of the whole of the letters given in evidence by the *Times* purporting to be written respectively by Mr. Parnell, Mr. Egan, Mr. Davitt, and Mr. O'Kelly, and that, in addition, you committed perjury in support of the case of the *Times*. Mr. Parnell has instructed us to inform you that he declines to hold any communication directly or indirectly with you, and he further

instructs us to return you the written confession which we enclose, and which for safety sake we send by hand.—We are, sir, yours obediently,

LEWIS & LEWIS.

Richard Pigott, Esq.

On the following day Sir Richard Webster made the announcement to the court that a letter had been received in Pigott's handwriting, posted in Paris, addressed to Mr. Shannon, the Dublin solicitor, who had been assisting Mr. Soames. The letter had not been opened, and he handed it to the President of the Commission, who passed it down to Mr. Cunynghame, and asked him to open and read its contents. It was Pigott's confession made to Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Lewis's letter to Pigott quoted above. The envelope contained also a note from the irrepressible Pigott as follows:

HÔTEL DE DEUX MONDES,
AVENUE DE L'OPERA, PARIS, Tuesday.

DEAR SIR,—Just before I left enclosed was handed to me. It had been left while I was out. Will write again soon.—Yours truly,

R. PIGOTT.

The confession, as far as the letters were concerned, ran as follows:

The circumstances connected with the obtaining of the letters, as I gave in evidence, are not true. No one save myself was concerned in the transaction. I told Houston that I had discovered the letters in Paris, but I grieve to have to confess that I simply myself fabricated them, using genuine letters of Messrs. Parnell and Egan in copying certain words, phrases, and general character of the handwriting. I traced some words and phrases by putting the genuine letter against the window, and placing on it the sheet of which copies have been read in court, and four or five letters of Mr. Egan, which were also read in court. I destroyed these letters after using them. Some of the

signatures I traced in this manner, and some I wrote. I then wrote to Houston telling him to come to Paris for the documents. I told him that they had been placed in a black bag with some old accounts, scraps of paper, and old newspapers. On his arrival I produced to him the letters, accounts, and scraps of paper. After a brief inspection he handed me a cheque on Cook for £500, the price that I told him I had agreed to pay for them. At the same time he gave me £105 in bank-notes as my own commission. The accounts put in were leaves torn from an old account book of my own, which contained details of the expenditure of Fenian money entrusted to me from time to time, which is mainly in the handwriting of David Murphy, my cashier. The scraps I found in the bottom of an old writing-desk. I do not recollect in whose writing they are.

The second batch of letters was also written by me. Mr. Parnell's signature was imitated from that published in the *Times* facsimile letter. I do not now remember where I got the Egan letter from which I copied the signature.

I had no specimen of Campbell's handwriting beyond the two letters of Mr. Parnell to me, which I presumed might be in Mr. Campbell's handwriting. I wrote to Mr. Houston that this second batch was for sale in Paris, having been brought there from America. He wrote asking to see them. I forwarded them accordingly, and after keeping them three or four days, he sent me a cheque on Cook for the price demanded for them, £550. The third batch consisted of a letter imitated by me from a letter written in pencil to me by Mr. Davitt when he was in prison, and of another letter copied by me from a letter of a very early date, which I received from James O'Kelly when he was writing on my newspapers, and of a third letter ascribed to Egan, the writing of which, and some of the words, I copied from an old bill of exchange in Mr. Egan's handwriting. £200 was the price paid to me by Mr. Houston for these three letters. It was paid in bank-notes. I have stated that for the first batch I received £105 for myself, for the second batch I got £50, for the third batch I was supposed to receive nothing.

I did not see Breslin in America. This was part of the deception.

With respect to my interview with Messrs. Parnell, Labou-

chere, and Lewis, my sworn statement is in the main correct. I am now, however, of opinion that the offer to me by Mr. Labouchere of £1000 was not for giving evidence but for any documents in Mr. Egan's or Mr. Parnell's handwriting that I might happen to have. My statement only referred to the first interviews with these gentlemen. I had a further interview with Mr. Labouchere, on which occasion I made him acquainted with further circumstances not previously mentioned by me at the preceding interviews.

There was a pause after Mr. Cunynghame finished reading the extraordinary document. It was an awkward moment for the Attorney-General, but, in an extremely dignified speech, he informed the court that, on behalf of his clients, he asked permission to withdraw from the consideration of the Commission the question of the genuineness of the letters which had been submitted to them. On that day Mr. Parnell appeared for the first time in the witness-box, and in answer to Sir Charles Russell's questions swore to the forgery of his signature on all the letters in question. There was no attempt to cross-examine on the part of Sir Richard Webster. Mr. Labouchere entered the witness-box on March 3. He gave his evidence very slowly and realistically, rather in the style perhaps of what Lord Randolph Churchill described as newspaper paragraphs, but there was no lack of connection in his descriptions of his various interviews with Pigott. When it came to the final interview on the preceding Saturday the questions of the great advocate became very close.

Sir Charles Russell. He came to your house?

Mr. Labouchere. He did.

Sir Charles Russell. Did you expect him?

Mr. Labouchere. No.

Sir Charles Russell. Had he given you any warning he was coming?

Mr. Labouchere. No.

Sir Charles Russell. Or had you asked him to come?

Mr. Labouchere. No.

Sir Charles Russell. Now tell us what took place on the occasion.

Mr. Labouchere He came in. I did not catch the name when the servant introduced him. I was writing at the table, and looked up, and saw him standing before me, and he said to me, "I suppose you are surprised at seeing me here?" And I said, "Oh! not at all. Pray take a seat."

Sir Charles Russell. I said what——?

Mr. Labouchere. "Not at all." Nothing would surprise me about Mr. Pigott. He sat down. He then said that he had come over to confess everything; that he supposed he should have to go to prison, and he was just as well there as anywhere else. I said that he must thoroughly understand if he did confess, the confession would be handed to Mr. Lewis, and that I must have a witness.

Of the historic interview in Mr. Labouchere's study in Grosvenor Gardens there has been no more graphic an account written than the one by its only witness, the veteran journalist, George Augustus Sala:

In February 1889 [he wrote] I was the occupant of a flat in Victoria Street, Westminster, and one Saturday, between one and two P.M., a knock came at my study door, and I was handed a letter which had been brought in hot haste by a servant who was instructed to wait for an answer. The missive was of the briefest possible kind, and was from my near neighbour Mr. Henry Labouchere, M.P., whose house was then at 24 Grosvenor Gardens. The note ran thus: "Can you leave everything and come here at once? Most important business.—H. L." I told the servant that I would be in Grosvenor Gardens within a quarter of an hour, and, ere that time had expired, I was ushered into a large library on the ground floor, where I found the senior member for Northampton smoking his sempiternal cigarette, but with an unusual and curious expression of animation on his normally passive countenance.

He was not alone. Ensconced in a roomy fauteuil, a few paces from Mr. Labouchere's writing-table, there was a somewhat

burly individual of middle stature and more than middle age. He looked fully sixty, although I have been given to understand that his age did not exceed fifty-five; but his elderly aspect was enhanced by his baldness, which revealed a large amount of oval *os frontis* fringed by grey locks. The individual had an eyeglass screwed into one eye, and he was using this optical aid most assiduously; for he was poring over a copy of that morning's issue of the *Times*, going right down one column and apparently up it again; then taking column after column in succession; then harking back as though he had omitted some choice paragraph; and then resuming the sequence of his lecture, ever and anon tapping that ovoid frontal bone of his, as though to evoke memories of the past, with a little silver pencil-case. I noted his somewhat shabby genteel attire, and, in particular, I observed that the hand which held the copy of the *Times* never ceased to shake. Mr. Labouchere, in his most courteous manner and his blandest tone, said, "Allow me to introduce you to a gentleman of whom you must have heard a great deal, Mr. ——." I replied, "There is not the slightest necessity for naming him. I know him well enough. That 's Mr. Pigott."

The individual in the capacious fauteuil wriggled from behind the *Times* an uneasy acknowledgment of my recognition; but if anything could be conducive to putting completely at his ease a gentleman who, from some cause or another, was troubled in his mind, it would have been the dulcet voice in which Mr. Labouchere continued: "The fact is that Mr. Pigott has come here, quite unsolicited, to make a full confession. I told him that I would listen to nothing he had to say, save in the presence of a witness, and, remembering that you lived close by, I thought that you would not mind coming here and listening to what Mr. Pigott has to confess, which will be taken down, word by word, from his dictation in writing." It has been my lot during a long and diversified career to have to listen to a large number of very queer statements from very queer people; and, by dint of experience, you reach at last a stage of stoicism when little, if anything, that is imparted to you excites surprise. Mr. Pigott, although he had screwed his courage to the sticking place of saying that he was going to confess, manifested considerable tardiness in orally "owning up." Conscience, we were justified in assuming, had

gnawed to an extent sufficient to make him disposed to relieve his soul from a dreadful burden; but conscience, to all seeming, had to gnaw a little longer and a little more sharply ere he absolutely gave tongue. So we let him be for about ten minutes. Mr. Labouchere kindled another cigarette. I lighted a cigar.

At length Mr. Pigott stood up and came forward into the light, by the side of Mr. Labouchere's writing-table. He did not change colour; he did not blench; but when—out of the fulness of his heart, no doubt—his mouth spake, it was in a low, half-musing tone, more at first as though he were talking to himself than to any auditors. By degrees, however, his voice rose, his diction became more fluent. It is only necessary that, in this place, I should say that, in substance, Pigott confessed that he had forged the letters alleged to have been written by Mr. Parnell; and he minutely described the manner in which he, and he alone, had executed the forgeries in question. Whether the man with the bald head and the eyeglass in the library at Grosvenor Gardens was telling the truth or was uttering another batch of infernal lies it is not for me to determine. No pressure was put upon him, no leading questions were asked him, and he went on quietly and continuously to the end of a story which I should have thought amazing had I not had occasion to hear many more tales even more astounding. He was not voluble, but he was collected, clear, and coherent; nor, although he repeatedly confessed to forgery, fraud, deception, and misrepresentation, did he seem overcome with anything approaching active shame. His little peccadilloes were plainly owned, but he appeared to treat them more as incidental weakness than as extraordinary acts of wickedness.

When he had come to the end of his statement Mr. Labouchere left the library for a few minutes to obtain a little refreshment. It was a great relief to me when he came back, for, when Pigott and I were left together, there came over me a vague dread that he might disclose his complicity with the Rye House Plot, or that he would admit that he had been the executioner of King Charles I. The situation was rather embarrasing; the time might have been tided over by whistling, but unfortunately I never learnt to whistle. It would have been rude to read a book; and besides, to do so would have necessitated my taking my eyes off Mr.

Pigott, and I never took them off him. We did get into conversation, but our talk was curt and trite. He remarked, first taking up that so-often-conned *Times*, that the London papers were inconveniently large. This, being a self-evident proposition, met with no response from me, but on his proceeding to say, in quite a friendly manner, that I must have found the afternoon's interview rather stupid work, I replied that, on the contrary, so far as I was concerned, I had found it equally amusing and instructive. Then the frugal Mr. Labouchere coming back with his mouth full, we went to business again. The whole of Pigott's confession, beginning with the declaration that he had made it uninvited and without any pecuniary consideration, was read over to him line by line and word by word. He made no correction or alteration whatsoever. The confession covered several sheets of paper, and to each sheet he affixed his initials. Finally, at the bottom of the completed document he signed his name beneath which I wrote mine as a witness.[1]

The history of the Commission subsequent to Pigott's disappearance does not belong to this biography. It is enough to say that it terminated its business on November 20, 1889, after having sat no less than 126 times.

On the 8th of March, eight days after his last appearance in the witness-box, the news of Pigott's suicide reached London. It appeared that after his interview with Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Sala, he treated himself to an evening's amusement at the Alhambra Music Hall. He left on Monday morning for Paris, whence he posted the envelope containing his confession and other enclosures to Mr. Shannon. He reached Madrid on Thursday, where he put up at the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, and spent the afternoon and following morning in visiting the churches and picture galleries. He would not have been tracked so quickly by the detectives if he had not sent a wire to Mr. Shannon—the Dublin solicitor who had assisted Mr. Soames—asking for the money "you promised me," which gave the clue to his

[1] *Life of Sala*, written by himself, vol. ii.

whereabouts. On the following afternoon, when he was informed by the hotel interpreter that a police officer wanted him, he retired to his bedroom and shot himself through the brain.[1]

Richard Pigott had one redeeming feature in his character —unless his complete lack of self-consciousness in evil doing be counted as another—an intense love for his motherless children. There were four of these. Mr. Labouchere's compassion for the wretched man had early been aroused in connection with the really pathetic state of his domestic affairs, and, although his "underground" relations with Pigott prevented him from being able to promise definitely to give him any assistance for his children in the event of the *Times* or Parnell prosecuting him as a consequence of his confession, it is easily to be imagined that Pigott would have perceived during his visits to Grosvenor Gardens the extraordinary tenderness of feeling that Mr. Labouchere could never conceal where there was a question of any suffering to be saved to a child. In his examination by Sir Charles Russell Mr. Labouchere had said: "Pigott said to me, 'I shall go to prison, but perhaps I am better there than anywhere else; the only thing I regret is the position of my children, who will starve.' I said: 'Well, I think they won't starve, or anything of that sort, but if you want me to make any terms about your children, you must not expect it from me.'" Poor puzzled Pigott! He had done everything he could to please every one round him, and yet he could get no one at this crisis to do the one thing that would have set his fluttering mind at ease. No one would promise to befriend the four little boys at Kingstown. Truly, as he had told Mr. Labouchere, he was in a terrible mess.

But as soon as the poor fellow was dead, and his motives could no longer be impugned by the vigilant Tories, Mr. Labouchere set himself with energy to see that the children were cared for. He sent a friend to Kingstown to report to

[1] Macdonald, *Diary of the Parnell Commission.*

him on the condition of the orphans, and she wrote to him as follows: "I had a long chat with the housekeeper who is to my mind an excellent woman. A more self-forgetful creature I never saw, and nobody ever wrapped truths in softer garments. She pitied her master. She says that Pigott adored these children, and that it was his desire to give them comforts and education which drove him into such crimes. I do hope that something will be done for these poor friendless children, to whom the father was a most indulgent parent. I saw lying in the room little toy yachts and tricycles, bearing evidence that there was softness as well as weakness in the character of the dead man. The only relative that the housekeeper knows of is an uncle, who holds a good position under the Government. She wrote to him and got no reply." A fund was started for the benefit of the children, and in the pages of *Truth* Mr. Labouchere pleaded their cause with eloquence. In May Archbishop Walsh wrote to him as follows:

4 Rutland Square,
Dublin, May 23, 1889.

Dear Mr. Labouchere,—There are two ways in which effect can be given to your charitable purpose. The trust can be executed direct through me, or I can arrange to have the matter carried out by the parish priests of the place where Pigott lived—Glasthule close by Kingstown, Dublin. I may say to you that two generous offers were made to me immediately after the suicide. One was a proposal to take charge of the two elder boys with a view to their emigration to the U. S. or Canada, where something would be done to give them a fair start. The other was an offer to take one of the younger children and practically to provide for this little fellow by an informal adoption.

In both cases I pointed out that there is, I fear, a serious difficulty in the way of my interfering in any prominent way in the case, and indeed in the interference of anyone who is an active sympathizer (as was the case in the two offers) with Home Rule, etc.

The Liberal Unionists of Dublin who brought the unfortunate father into temptation have a heavy responsibility towards the poor children. It is worse than mean of them to shirk it. But they not only shirk it, they try to throw the responsibility on to the other side. The insinuation made by many of them is that Pigott was got out of the country by sympathizers with Mr. Parnell, and that the suicide even may have been managed for a consideration.

A very serious question then arises as to what can be prudently done in the case of the children. Of course they must not be neglected. But, so far as I can see, there is no present danger on that score. The two elder boys are at school at Clongowes, a high-class school for lay pupils, conducted by the Jesuit Fathers. Their schoolfellows have, throughout the whole case, shown a splendid spirit towards them. The two younger boys are safely placed in charge of the former housekeeper in a place where they are not known, not far from Dublin.

My advice would be to let matters lie until the school holiday time comes on, about the beginning of July.

In the meantime I shall communicate with the persons who made the offers of which I have told you.

When the case comes to be dealt with, I should suggest that the best way to act would be through Canon Harold, the parish priest.

Meanwhile should not something be done through the newspapers to work up the call, which can be most legitimately made, on the Irish Liberal Unionists to do at all events something really substantial in the case?—I remain, dear Mr. Labouchere, faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WALSH, Archbishop of Dublin.

The statement of Dr. Walsh that there were people in Dublin who insinuated that Pigott had been got out of the country by the friends of the Nationalists seems almost incredible, but it is a fact that, even in England, in country places, lectures were given, under the auspices of the Primrose League, to persuade rural voters, who might have been reading the newspapers, that the forgery of the Pigott letters

had never been proved, and even more ridiculous statements were made in some places. Mr. Labouchere wrote in *Truth* on March 7:

I feel it my duty solemnly to affirm that (incredible as it may appear to Primrose Dames) I did not bribe Pigott to commit suicide by promising him an annuity. It is somewhat fortunate for me that I can prove an alibi; otherwise I make no doubt that I should have been accused of having been concealed in Pigott's room at Madrid, and having shot him. Well, well, I suppose that allowance must be made for the crew of idiots who have gone about vowing that the *Times* forgeries were genuine letters, and who are now grovelling in the mire that they have prepared for themselves.

Nothing can exceed my sorrow that we were not privileged to hear in court the evidence of the expert in handwriting, Inglis. So great, indeed, is my regret that I will willingly (if the *Times* is in want of money) pay the sum of £20 for his "proof." I have always regarded these experts as the most dreary of humbugs, and in this view I am now confirmed. I myself subjected the photographs of the *Times* forgeries to the limelight in a magic-lantern, and I soon discovered that there were signs of tracing. In some of the words—and particularly in the signatures—there is a small white line, where the ink had not taken over the tracing. If Inglis had done the same, he would not probably have made so ridiculous a fool of himself.

It must be owned that Mr. Labouchere made himself exceedingly annoying in the pages of *Truth* on the subject of the forged letters. His taunts and scathing witticisms at the expense of the prosecuting side and Messrs. Soames, Houston & Co. were almost past enduring, and more than one apology was furiously demanded of him, to which he usually replied by heaping more ridicule on the unfortunate, writhing victim. Some abortive attempts were made to hoax him and make a fool of him as he succeeded so frequently in doing of others. In the winter of 1889 a somewhat unpleasant case was brought before the Central Criminal

Court, the only event of public interest connected with which was the departure from England of a well-known nobleman on the very eve of the day that the warrant was issued for his arrest, and it was in connection with this affair that someone tried to put salt on Labby's tail. Whoever the joker was he must have felt rather sold when he read the following paragraph in the next issue of Labby's journal;

I have received through the post the following letter and enclosure. Evidently someone is attempting to Pigott me. I do not hesitate to say that the letters are not from those by whom they profess to be written. It is really shameful that two such good men and true as Lord Salisbury and Mr. Houston should be selected for this reprehensible hoax.

PRIMROSE LEAGUE CENTRAL OFFICES,
VICTORIA STREET.

SIR, I enclose you an autograph letter of Lord Salisbury. I obtained it from a man of the name of Hammond, whom I promised to reward if he could get me any letters likely to injure the character of Tory leaders. He tells me that a client of his in Cleveland Street called upon him and produced it from a black bag. I have already offered the letter to Lord Hartington and to the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but they have both declined to have anything to do with it. If you use it I must request you to send me a cheque for £1000, and you must pledge yourself never to give up the name of Hammond. He is a very worthy man, and he fears that if it were known that he had given me the letter some Tory would shoot him.—Your obedient servant,

E. C. HOUSTON.

(*Enclosure*)

HATFIELD HOUSE, Oct., 17.

MY DEAR LORD***,—There is a good deal of evidence against you, although the Lord Chancellor and the Attorney-General have decided that the evidence of identity is not sufficient, but I hear a rumour that more evidence can be obtained. I can count upon the Chancellor standing to his guns, but I am not quite so sure of Webster. He, you know, will have to answer that

scoundrel Labouchere in the House of Commons, when he brings on the subject and he is getting shaky. Perhaps he will be forced to issue a warrant.—Yours very truly,

SALISBURY.

Another hoax practised on Mr. Labouchere came off, and a considerable time elapsed before the perpetrator of it was discovered. He eventually turned out to be a member of one of the most staid and respectable clubs in London. Here is the story of the hoax, as Mr. Labouchere related it in *Truth:*

During the last few weeks I have received a number of anonymous letters, all in the same handwriting, couched in terms the reverse of complimentary. Some of them were on the paper of the East India United Service Club, St. James's Square. This did not trouble me, as I receive so many of such letters that I am accustomed to them. On Thursday last, however, my anonymous friend sent orders signed in my name to a number of tradesmen desiring them to send me goods. He ordered two hearses each with two mourning coaches, and requested a representative of the cremation company to call and arrange for my cremation. He also ordered a marriage cake of Messrs. Buzzard, a bed of Messrs. Shoolbred, furniture of Messrs. Maple, Messrs. Druce, and Messrs. Barker & Co.; coal of Messrs. Whiteley, Ricketts, Herbert Clarke & Co.; Cockerell & Lee; a coat of Mr. Cording, caps of Messrs. Lincoln & Bennett, a billiard table of Messrs. Thurston, prints of Messrs. Clifford, carpets of Messrs. Swan & Edgar, beer, spirits, and wine from several firms, some of which was delivered, and a vast number of other goods from West End houses, including an umbilical belt for hernia from a city firm. He also sent letters to various physicians in my name, and they have favoured me in reply with prescriptions for divers diseases. He further engaged cabins for me to India and to the United States. Not content with this he ordered a salmon to be sent in my name to Mr. Gladstone, a Stilton cheese to Sir William Harcourt, a travelling bag to Mr. Asquith, and a haunch of venison to Sir George Trevelyan. And he supplemented these liberal orders

by issuing invitations in the name of a mythical niece to a party at Twickenham and a dinner at my London house. All this is far more annoying to the tradesmen than it is to me, and I would therefore suggest to my friend to revert to his old plan of anonymous letters. Neither of the hearses came, owing to representatives of the firms having called to know how many men would be required to carry my corpse downstairs. Had the hearse arrived it would have been curious, as the mutes would probably have disputed in which I was to be moved off, and would have had to appeal to me eating my marriage cake and arrayed in my umbilical belt to decide to which I would give my preference.

CHAPTER XV

MR. LABOUCHERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE CABINET

THERE is no doubt about the fact that Mr. Labouchere was always at his best when he was in Opposition. This characteristic was not peculiar to him, but was shared by Sir William Harcourt, and, in a marked degree, by Lord Randolph Churchill. During the six years of Lord Salisbury's second administration (August, 1886–August, 1892), he stood out prominently as a man of ability and independent courage in what was an extremely weak and inefficient Opposition. Always true to his Radical principles, he protested ably whenever the questions of Civil Service estimates were to the fore—the expenses incurred in the removal or restoration of diplomatic and consular buildings, or in the organisation of missions and embassies to foreign countries, all the involved expenditure that is comprehended under the term, so mysterious to the lay mind, of "miscellaneous legal buildings," in the upkeep of the royal parks and palaces. The annual expenditure for the warming and lighting of Kew Palace especially aroused his ire. He had, he said, hunted for the building and at last perceived over an iron gate a tumble down, depressed-looking house in which he could not imagine that anyone less insane than George III. in his later years could be expected to wish to reside, and if there were any such, they might, at least, warm and light themselves without any application to the British taxpayer. As for Kensington Palace, to vote an annual sum for its

maintenance was merely dropping water into a bottomless well. It was dilapidated and useless. Why not pull it down or turn it into a large restaurant—an investment which would certainly pay—and put money *into* the taxpayer's pockets for a change? Of course he should advocate that only temperance drinks should be sold upon the premises, but even with that restriction a profit would be certain. Then he would attack the extravagance of the House of Commons. Oil lamps in the committee rooms! Were Ministers a species of patron saints before whom perpetual lamps had to be kept burning in order to secure their favours? Electric light had been installed in the House, and yet the annual sum spent on oil lamps was undiminished. Perhaps, replied the long-suffering Mr. Plunkett, after the expenditure on oil had been ruthlessly gone into and shown to be superfluous, the hon. member for Northampton will soon be a Minister himself and will then know the awkwardness of attending in the House from three in the afternoon to one in the morning and having to turn up or down an oil lamp every time he went from one room to another. In short, Mr. Labouchere's obstructionary tactics were magnificent.

His speeches on the Triple Alliance were marked by an intimate knowledge of European politics acquired by a long and sympathetic frequentation of the best politicians in Europe and as different as possible from the accumulation of facts out of text-books which formed the mental equipment on the subject of many of his colleagues. The point of departure of his first speech on the Triple Alliance was a statement made in the Italian Parliament on May 14, 1891, by a deputy named Chiala to the effect that the Italian position was now secure by land and sea, English interests being identical with Italian. On June 2, 1891, he asked Sir James Fergusson whether special undertakings were entered into in 1887 between England and Italy of such importance as to justify Signor Chiala's remark, which had met with no challenge in the Italian Chamber, and he spoke

with characteristic eloquence both then and on July 9, against the renewal of the Triple Alliance, which obliged England, he said, to side with Italy against France, under the pretext of maintaining the status quo in the Mediterranean. Mr. Gladstone wrote him the following letter on the subject:

HAWARDEN CASTLE, CHESTER, July 11, 1891.

DEAR MR. LABOUCHERE,—So far as I can understand I think you have left the question of the Triple Alliance and our relation to it standing well in itself and well for us. If ever there was a complication from which England ought to stand absolutely aloof it is this. I would take for a proof apart from all others the astounding letter of Mr. Stead in yesterday's *Pall Mall Gazette*, who founds an European policy on the isolation of France still perhaps at the head of continental civilisation. I fear with you that Salisbury has given virtual pledges for himself which in all likelihood he will never even be called upon to redeem, and which Parliament and members of Parliament may with perfect propriety object to his redeeming. What a little surprises me is that the Italians should not better understand the frailty of the foundation on which I fear they have built their hopes.

In the *Daily News* yesterday Mr. White says the alliance was first concluded in 1882. If so it was certainly without our approbation, I think without our knowledge.—Yours faithfully,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

In Mr. Labouchere's attacks on Lord Salisbury's Foreign Office adminstration, he found many of the opportunities which he loved of pouring ridicule upon the whole institution of diplomacy. He told the Committee, during the discussion on the Foreign Office vote, how the service is recruited. A friend of his, he said, who reached the top of his profession, presented himself for examination. Of the questions put before him he could answer none, being completely ignorant of the subjects upon which they were supposed to test him. Great was his surprise when the results of the examination

were made known. He found himself not only passed but at the top of the list of candidates. "How can these things be?" he asked the examiner when he next met him. "Well," replied the great man, "we saw you knew nothing, but your manner was so free from constraint under what to some people would have been embarrassing circumstances, that we decided: 'That 's the very man to make a diplomatist,' and so we passed you." That this little anecdote was introduced to the notice of Sir James Fergusson as a prelude to Mr. Labouchere's bland explanation that, according to his personal experience, Under-Secretaries for Foreign Affairs and members of the diplomatic body generally were of all men the most ignorant, did not rob it of any of its sting. Across the Channel, Mr. Labouchere's abilities, where foreign politics were concerned, were rated at their true value. In February, 1892, the *Voltaire* published a long article dealing with the personality of this "remarkable man" and his knowledge of European affairs, which concluded with these words: "Mr. Labouchere is one of those grand Englishmen who do credit both to the party which they defend and to the party which they condescend to attack. Moreover, shortly he will be a member of the Cabinet, and Mr. Gladstone depends on his co-operation to finish the last struggle with the dying Tory party."

That Mr. Labouchere's name was not included in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet of 1892 was an omission that struck not only European politicians but the public of England, both Conservative and Radical, as curious. Mr. Gladstone, who had intended him to have one of the most important offices in the Cabinet (not the Post Office, as has been so often asserted), was himself taken aback, and so much so that when he was made aware that the Queen would object to Mr. Labouchere's name being submitted to her, he went the length of privately asking Mr. Labouchere to write him a letter stating that he should not accept office were it offered to him. Had Mr. Labouchere been under the necessity of

wishing to improve his political position in the country, there is no doubt that this would have been his opportunity for doing so. Such a course of action would have appeared to the superficial observer to fit in with his Radical principles, and he could have pretended to his followers that he considered his power greater below the gangway than on the pedestal of office, and (a matter, however, which was of supreme indifference to him) his enemies could not have pointed the finger of scorn at him. Incidentally, too, Mr. Gladstone would have been saved from an imputation of ingratitude to a follower who had stood by him, through thick and thin, to win the cause that the Grand Old Man had nearest his heart, to wit, Home Rule for Ireland, and a follower, who, throughout a long and original political career, had never once failed towards his leader in any detail of the minutiæ that went to make up the etiquette of political intercourse in the last century. But, as Mr. Labouchere explained to a near relative at the time, he could n't stand the humbug of the suggestion, and he would, moreover, have been pledged to support the Ministry. Besides, that the Queen should have objected to him was not a surprise. Nobody was able to appreciate better than himself, with his tolerant view of human nature, the fact that tastes differ, and to realise more fully that, in so far as personal feelings went, he might very easily be a *persona ingrata* where Court favour was concerned. "So that the good ship *Democracy* sails prosperously into Joppa," he wrote at the time, "I care not whether my berth is in the officers' quarters or in the forecastle. Jones or Jonah it is all the same to me, and if I thought that my being thrown overboard would render the success of the voyage more certain, overboard I would go with pleasure—all the more as I can swim." But, in his surmise as to why the Queen had objected to him he was mistaken, and he did not know the real reason until several years afterwards. He imagined it was because he had so persistently protested against the Royal grants, whenever

they had appeared to him excessive.[1] It is difficult to see why Mr. Gladstone, *having told him as much as he did*, did not tell him more—to wit, the actual facts. It would have been perfectly straightforward and perfectly consistent, and the explanation was one that Mr. Labouchere could have accepted with dignity, and all appearance of a slight put upon an eminent politician, by treating him as a nobody to be passed over without any kind of justification, would have been avoided. The fact of Mr. Labouchere's being the proprietor of and "chief writer" in *Truth* was the ground of the Queen's objection, and if my readers have followed the course of this biography with care, they will very easily be able to imagine how early, and also how very reasonably, the Queen's dislike to the publication had taken root.

Mr. Labouchere's jest about Mr. Gladstone laying upon Providence the responsibility of always placing the ace of trumps up his sleeve was a good one. In one of his private letters I find the quip worded a little more pungently. "Who cannot refrain," he says, referring to the then Prime Minister, "from perpetually bringing an ace down his sleeve, even when he has only to play fair to win the trick." Clearly in the case of the exclusion of Mr. Labouchere from his Cabinet, Mr. Gladstone had only to play a simple and straightforward game for the trick to be his. In fact, it *was* his with the Queen. There was no necessity for any further ruse, and the matter would have ended.

[1] The following paragraph from one of Mr. Labouchere's Draft Reports, composed when he was member of a committee to investigate the whole question of Royal grants in 1891, shows how reasonable this surmise was:

"In conclusion, your Committee desires to record its emphatic opinion, that the cost of the maintenance of the Members of the Royal Family is already so great, that under no circumstances should it be increased. In its opinion, a majority of Her Majesty's subjects regard the present cost of Royalty as excessive, and it deems it, therefore, most undesirable to prejudice any decisions that may be taken in regard to this cost, when the entire subject will come under the cognisance of Parliament, by granting, either directly or indirectly, allowances or annuities to any of the grandchildren of the Sovereign."

Mr. Labouchere, still in the dark about the reason of the slight put upon him, replied thus to one of his supporters at Northampton, who questioned him as to the fact that he was not included in the Cabinet. He seems to have made an effort to put the matter as well as he could for his leader:

5 Old Palace Yard, Aug. 19, 1892.

Dear Mr. Tonsley,—The Queen expressed so strong a feeling against me as one of her Ministers that, as I understand it, Mr. Gladstone did not think it desirable to submit my name to her.—Yours truly,

Henry Labouchere.

The following correspondence ensued. In reading it, it must always be borne in mind that Mr. Labouchere did not at that time know the precise grounds upon which he had been excluded from the Cabinet:

Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Labouchere

Hawarden Castle, Aug. 22, 1892.

Dear Mr. Labouchere,—My attention has been called to a letter addressed by you to Mr. Tonsley, and printed in the *Times* of to-day, and I have to assure you that the understanding which has been conveyed to you is not correct. I am alone responsible for recommendations submitted to Her Majesty respecting the tenure of political office, or of the absence of such recommendation in any given instance. I was aware of the high position you had created for yourself in the House of Commons and of the presumption which would naturally arise that your name could not fail to be considered on any occasion when a Government had to be formed. I gave accordingly my best consideration to the subject, and I arrived at the conclusion that there were incidents in your case which, while they testified to your energy and influence, were in no degree disparaging to your honour, but which appeared to me to render it unfit that I should ask your leave to submit your name to Her Majesty for a political

office which would involve your becoming a servant of the Crown. —Believe me very faithfully yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Gladstone

5 OLD PALACE YARD, Aug. 23, 1892.

DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—I beg to acknowledge your letter of yesterday's date, and to thank you for its kindly tone towards myself. I had been away from home, and only got it when it was too late to alter anything that I had written for this week's *Truth* upon the matter, as the paper goes to press on Tuesday at 12 o'clock. I feel sure that you will recognise that I have never asked you—directly or indirectly—for any post in your administration. I should indeed not have alluded publicly to the the matter, owing to its personal character, had it not been that the newspapers were discussing why I was not asked to become a member of your administration, the implication being that I had urged "claims," and that I resented their being ignored. I fully perceive the difficulty of your position, and, whilst I cannot admit that the Sovereign has a right to impose any veto on the Prime Minister that she has selected in the choice of his colleagues, I admire your chivalry in covering the Royal action by assuming the constitutional responsibility of a proceeding, in regard to which I must ask you to allow me to retain the conviction that you were not a free agent.

With respect to myself, it is a matter of absolute unimportance that I am not a servant of the Crown, or—as we Radicals should put it—an Executive servant of the Nation. The precedent, however, is a dangerous one, as circumstances might occur in which the Royal ostracism of some particular person from the public service might impair the efficiency of a Liberal Ministry representing views not in accordance with Court opinion. Of this there is no danger in the present case. My personality is too insignificant to have any influence on public affairs, and I am —if I may be allowed to say so—far too stalwart a Radical not to support an administration which I trust will secure to us Home Rule in Ireland; true non-intervention abroad; and many democratic reforms in the United Kingdom. My only regret

is that the Liberal party has not seen its way to include many other and more drastic reforms in its programme, notably the abolition of the House of Lords and the Disendowment and Disestablishment of the Church of England.

It will always be a source of pride to me that you thought me worthy of being one of your colleagues, and that, in regard to the incidents which rendered it impossible for you to act in accordance with this flattering opinion, you consider that they testify to my energy and influence, and are in no way disparaging to my honour.

With the sincerest hope that you may long be preserved as the People's Minister, I have the honour to be yours most faithfully,

H. Labouchere.

Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Labouchere

Hawarden Castle, Aug. 25, 1892.

Dear Mr. Labouchere,—I cannot hesitate to answer your appeal. At no time and in no form have I had from you any signification of a desire for office. You do me personally more than justice. My note to you is nothing more nor less than a true and succinct statement of the facts as well as the constitutional doctrine which applies to them. I quite agree with you that men in office are the political servants of the country, as well as of the Crown. There are incidents attaching to them in each aspect, and I mentioned the capacity which alone touched the case before me.—Believe me very faithfully yours,

W. E. Gladstone.

It would be idle to deny that the fact of not being in the Cabinet was, temporarily, a very great disappointment to Mr. Labouchere. Faithful Northampton forwarded to him, through the Executive of their Liberal Association, the following resolution, the sentiment and kindly feeling of which was appreciated to the full by Northampton's member: "That this Executive records its warmest praise for the brilliant defences of democracy put forth by the senior member

for Northampton, and rejoices at his fealty to the ties of party, notwithstanding the personal affront of unrequited services; and, further, it is more than satisfied that, by this tactical error, he continues free to serve the cause of the people, in which in the past he has so signally distinguished himself." It was to Northampton that Mr. Labouchere frankly expressed where the real sting of his treatment by his party lay: "Mr. Gladstone handsomely testified," he said, "that I had never asked for office. It is, however, one thing not to desire office, and another thing to be stigmatised as a political leper unfitted for it owing to incidents which, while testifying to my energy and influence are in no way disparaging to my honour."[1]

Mr. Labouchere spent his summer holiday as usual at Cadenabbia, and his mind soon resumed its equable habit of thought. The return of Sir Charles Dilke to the House of Commons had been a genuine pleasure to him, and he was in constant correspondence with him during his holiday, which he extended some weeks beyond its usual limits. His letters dealt largely with the, to him, all-absorbing subject of the renewal of the Triple Alliance.

"Notwithstanding," he wrote on September 17, "the excitement about the Italian workmen in France (which has now cooled down) I very much doubt whether the King will be able for long to keep going the Triple Alliance. The customs Union with Austria has not been a success, and the taxes are so enormous that there must come a crash. The Socialists and the Anarchists are joined by many who simply want to live, and who put down the heavy taxation and the want of a market to the policy of the Government. As for the Army, it is not worth much, as they have depleted the line regiments of good men in order to form a few crack regiments. If the French were to play their cards well, they might soon force the King into a friendly understanding. I

[1] Letter to Mr. Fredk. Covington, Chairman of the Northampton Liberal and Radical Association, Sept. 13, 1892.

wonder when Parliament will meet next year, if it sits until Xmas. I suspect that our revered leader is angling to be able to get south in January and possibly February. If he can he will dodge every question except H. R."

Another sentence from a letter to the same correspondent I cannot resist quoting. It is so easy to picture how very much he must have enjoyed reading the German and Italian papers to which he refers, for the details of the great Italian statesman's policy were almost like spelling-book knowledge to him. "I have been amused," he wrote on September 10, "at the comments of the German and Italian papers upon Mr. Gladstone's declaration that Cavour would have been for Irish Home Rule." Here is another charming letter written from Cadenabbia: "A man who is owned by a dog has a troublous time. I am owned by a child, who is owned by a dog. I have a daughter. This daughter insisted on my buying her a puppy which she saw in the arms of some dog stealer when we were at Homburg. My advice to parents is, Never allow your parental feelings to lead you to buy your daughter a dog, and then to travel about with daughter and dog. This puppy is the bane of my existence. Railroad companies do not issue through tickets for dogs. The unfortunate traveller has to jump out every hour or so to buy a fresh ticket. I tried to hide the beast away without a ticket, but it always betrayed me by barking when the guard looked in. I tried to leave it at a station, but the creature (who adds blind fidelity to its other objectionable qualities) always turned up before the train started, affectionately barking and wagging its tail. The puppy, being an infant, is often sick, generally at the most undesirable moments for this sort of thing to happen. When it is not sick it is either hungry or thirsty, and it is very particular about its food. I find bones surreptitiously secreted in my pockets. I am told that they are for the puppy, and if I throw them away I am regarded as a heartless monster. Yesterday he ate a portion of my sponge. I did not interfere with him, for I had heard

that sponges were fatal to dogs. It disagreed with him, but alas, he recovered. I take him out with me in boats, in the hope that he will leap into the lake, but he sticks to the boat. I am reduced to such a condition on account of this cur that I sympathise with Bill Sikes in his objection to being followed everywhere by his faithful dog. Am I doomed, I ask, to be for ever pestered with this animal? Will he never be lost, will he never be run over, will he recover from the distemper if fortune favours me by his having this malady? Never, I repeat, buy your daughter a dog, and travel with daughter and dog."[1]

Mr. Labouchere did not return to London before the middle of October. The question of foreign affairs interested him unceasingly throughout Mr. Gladstone's fourth administration. When the composition of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet had been published in the continental papers, many comments had been made upon the appointment of Lord Rosebery to be Foreign Secretary, and the *Temps* published a pointed leading article on the subject. It declared that Lord Rosebery was regarded by many persons as the incarnation of Imperialism and Chauvinism, but it went on to reassure its readers by saying that after all, as Mr. Gladstone would be so occupied with his Home Rule scheme and minor social questions, the hankerings of the Foreign Office after national glory would be suppressed. In any case, it added, Mr. Labouchere will, if necessary, criticise and protest against dangerous ardour. The subject of Uganda occupied the English Parliament early in 1903, and Mr. Labouchere moved an amendment to the Address to the effect that he hoped that the Commissioner sent by Her Majesty to Uganda would effect the evacuation of that country by the British South African Company without any further Imperial responsibility being incurred. He gave an account of how the treaty with the King of Uganda had been obtained, culled from Captain Lugard's own report. Captain Lugard ar-

[1] *Truth*, September, 1892.

rived in the country, he said, with a considerable force of Zanzibaris with breech-loaders and two Maxim guns. A warm discussion arose on many points. Some of the chiefs were for signing, but the King held back and giggled and fooled. He demanded time. "I replied," reported Lugard, "by rapping the table and speaking loudly, and said he must sign now. I threatened to leave the next day if he did not, and possibly to go to his enemies. I pointed out to him that he had lost the southern half of his kingdom to the Germans by his delay, and that he would lose more if he delayed now. He was, I think, scared at my manner, and trembled very violently." . . . And so on. The speech was one of remarkable power. Although it covers over ten pages of *Hansard*, the reader's interest does not flag for an instant. It was replied to by the Prime Minister with appreciation and vigour.

On February 13 Mr. Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill,[1] and the speech Mr. Labouchere made during the debate is his last utterance on the subject that I shall quote. He was true to his great leader to the very end, although that end had been extended to a date far beyond the period that might reasonably have been expected. It was a remarkable fact, said Mr. Labouchere, that in 1886 they were told that Home Rule would ruin Ireland and the proof was that securities had gone down. They were now told that Home Rule would ruin Ireland because securities had gone up! As a matter of fact, balances at savings banks had gone up because of certain Land Acts and Rent Acts, by which a good deal of money which used to go into the landlord's pockets now went into the savings bank. . . . A matter like the Home Rule scheme was necessarily very complicated. They had two islands, one a large one and one a small one. The

[1] The first reading took place on Feb. 20. It was passed through Committee on July 27. After a scene of uproar it passed the House of Commons on Sept. 2, by a majority of 34. It was thrown out by the Lords on Sept. 9, by a majority of 378.

object of the Bill was to enable them to produce such a state of things as would enable them to have a local Parliament in Ireland dealing alone with Irish matters, and a Parliament in England dealing with British local matters, and also with Imperial matters. It was very much like trying to put a square peg into a round hole. He quite agreed that the angles of the peg would remain. They could not get the fit geometrically perfect, but the great object was to get the best fit they could under the circumstances. It must always be remembered in this matter of Home Rule that they had to choose between two alternatives. After the Bill of 1886 the Unionists went before the country saying that there was a third course, that of some species of local government. When they got into power where was the third course? It entirely disappeared. . . . The Duke of Devonshire had tried to terrify them the other night about the House of Lords, that the House was going to defend the liberties of the United Kingdom by running counter to the will of the people. For his part, he had never been strongly in favour of an assembly like the House of Lords. He could not understand why some six hundred gentlemen should interfere with the decisions of the representatives of the people. If they did they would find that additional force would be given to the intention of the democracy to put an end to their existence.[1] It is interesting to note that in this, his last Parliament, the Prime Minister himself was converted to Mr. Labouchere's views on the Upper Chamber. When his Home Rule Bill was thrown out by the Lords, and his Parish Councils Bill maimed and emasculated, he came to the conclusion that there was a decisive case against the House of Lords. "Upon the whole, he argued," says Lord Morley, "it was not too much to say for practical purposes the Lords had destroyed the work of the House of Commons, unexampled as that work was in the time and pains bestowed upon it. 'I suggested dissolution to my colleagues in London, where half

[1] *Hansard*, Feb. 16, 1893, vol. viii., Series 4.

or more than half the Cabinet were found at the moment. I received by telegraph a hopelessly adverse reply.' Reluctantly he let the idea drop, always maintaining, however, that a signal opportunity had been lost."[1]

In spite of Mr. Labouchere's activity during the winter of 1892–3 his health was not good. He suffered from constant colds and coughs, and his throat, too, was troublesome. The desire for change was upon him, and his mind went back to the happy days of his youth in America. He would have liked to be made Minister at Washington. The idea had occurred to him at Cadenabbia when some American friends had suggested to him how popular such an appointment would be on the other side of the Atlantic. The climate would have suited him, and, above all, the friction which was so inevitable between him and the Cabinet would have been avoided. Washington was quite removed from any of those quarters of the globe where Mr. Labouchere's and Lord Rosebery's foreign policy might possibly come into collision. But his desire was not to be fulfilled. Perhaps naturally, Lord Rosebery thought that his appointment to such an important post would look rather as if he were trying to get rid of a formidable opponent, or at least as if he were trying to bribe him into silence. His refusal to grant Mr. Labouchere's request was unqualified, and Mr. Labouchere acknowledged the repulse, with his usual philosophic calm. "However," he wrote to Lord Rosebery, on December 8, 1892," as the matter rests with you, and as you are averse to the suggestion, I can only say that all is for the best in the best of worlds."

Mr. Gladstone resigned the Premiership on March 3, 1894, and Lord Rosebery became Prime Minister. The life of the Liberal Government was short, and Mr. Labouchere soon found himself again in his native air of Opposition, when his old interest in Parliamentary matters revived. It was a matter of common knowledge that Mr. Labouchere was strongly opposed to the Premiership of Lord Rosebery, as

[1] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii.

anyone possessed of his strong Radical nature was bound to be, but that he had anything to do with the snap division which ended Lord Rosebery's Ministry[1] is clearly contradicted by an interview which was published in the *Globe* on the very day after the fall of the Ministry. The *Globe* correspondent found Mr. Labouchere in the highest spirits smoking his "eternal cigarette" in his study at Old Palace Yard. "What do you think of the present condition of things?" he asked.

"Well," replied Mr. Labouchere, "I have only just become aware of what happened. I was sitting on the terrace yesterday evening just about seven with Sir William Harcourt, who was joking about the quietness of things, and saying it was a dull day without a crisis, when the division bell rang. I said, 'Great Heavens! What 's that for? I want to get home to dinner.' With that I rushed into the division with Sir William, and really did n't know what it was about—you know you can get into the Lobby now direct by a special door. Well, having recorded my vote I hurried off to the theatre, and did n't wait to enter the House. Of course, if I had known what was going to happen I should have waited to see the row. I heard nothing of the affair until this morning, when I read it here," added Mr. Labouchere, pointing to the newpaper beside him.

"I see," said the interviewer, "that you voted with the Government?"

"Oh yes. I want less cartridges—not more, and anything in that direction gets my support. As far as I could see it was only a rag-tag division."

"Do you mean one of those dinner-time snatches, like your House of Lords amendment?"[2]

"Oh no, not even as good as that; just the swing of the pendulum."[3]

[1] The Government was defeated on the night of June 21, 1895, upon a vote taken in Committee on the Army Estimates. [2] *The Globe*, June 22, 1895.

[3] On March 13, 1894, Mr. Labouchere had moved an amendment to the

The question on South Africa was soon to agitate England, and all matters of lesser interest must be left now to show the impassioned part which Mr. Labouchere played in an affair which cannot be said even to-day to have found its final solution.

Address, praying the Queen to withdraw the power of the Lords to veto Bills. The division was called during the dinner hour, when the House was comparatively empty, and the Government were found to be in a minority of 2. Sir William Harcourt, who reproved Mr. Labouchere for the levity with which he approached a great constitutional question, got out of the dilemma by moving a new Address.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA

ON Sunday, December 29, 1895, an armed force commanded by Dr. Jameson and Captain Willoughby invaded the territory of the Republic of the Transvaal. The object of the Jameson Raid was to combine with a body of disaffected Englishmen, living at Johannesburg, in order to upset the Government of the Transvaal, and, thereby, to provoke the intervention of the neighbouring British Commissioner, and so lead to the remission of the grievances of the Uitlander population. Such intervention, in the opinion of those responsible for the Raid, was not intended to result in the absorption of the South African Republic by the British Empire, though this point has never been made altogether clear. The English in Johannesburg, the Uitlanders as they were called in Dutch, failed, however, to meet the invaders, and Jameson and his men were captured without difficulty by the troops of the Republic, and were handed over to the Imperial Government to be tried and punished. Subsequently, a select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to investigate the causes of the Raid. The Committee, which numbered amongst its members Mr. Labouchere, met for the first time on February 5, 1897. The directors of the British South Africa Company, Messrs. C. J. Rhodes, Jameson, Alfred Beit, Lionel Phillips, and Rutherford Harris, were represented by Counsel. Mr. Labouchere frequently told me that he had never felt altogether

satisfied with the composition of the Committee. There were not enough stalwart Radicals on it. It was composed as follows: Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Chamberlain, the Attorney-General, Mr. Cripps, Sir W. Hart Dyke, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Wharton, Mr. George Wyndham, Sir William Harcourt, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, Messrs. John Ellis, Sidney Buxton, Blake, Labouchere, and Bigham (now Lord Mersey). Mr. Labouchere found his chief support in Mr. Blake, but even he fell off towards the end, and the member for Northampton registered his solitary vote for the second reading of the alternative report with which he wished to replace that of the chairman. The chairman's report finally adopted by the Committee may be summarised as follows:

"(1) Great discontent had for some time previous to the incursion existed in Johannesburg, arising from the grievances of the Uitlanders.

"(2) Mr. Rhodes occupied a great position in South Africa; he was Prime Minister of Cape Colony, and, beyond all other persons, should have been careful to abstain from such a course as that which he adopted. As Managing Director of the British South Africa Company, as director of the De Beers Consolidated Mines and the Gold Fields of South Africa, Mr. Rhodes controlled a great combination of interests: he used his position and those interests to promote and assist his policy. Whatever justification there may have been for action, on the part of the people of Johannesburg, there was none for the conduct of a person in Mr. Rhodes' position, in subsidising, organising, and stimulating an armed insurrection against the Government of the South African Republic, and employing the forces and resources of the Chartered Company to support such a revolution. He seriously embarrassed both the Imperial and Colonial Governments, and his proceedings resulted in the invasion of the territory of a state which was in friendly relations with Her Majesty, in breach of the obligation to

respect the right to self-government of the South African Republic under the conventions between Her Majesty and that state. Although Dr. Jameson 'went in' without Mr. Rhodes' authority, it was always part of the plan that these forces should be used in the Transvaal in support of an insurrection. Nothing could justify such a use of such a force, and Mr. Rhodes' heavy responsibility remains, although Dr. Jameson at the last moment invaded the Transvaal without his direct sanction.

"(3) Such a policy once embarked upon inevitably involved Mr. Rhodes in grave breaches of duty to those to whom he owed allegiance. He deceived the High Commissioner representing the Imperial Government, he concealed his views from his colleagues in the Colonial Ministry and from the Board of the British South Africa Company, and led his subordinates to believe that his plans were approved by his superiors.

"(4) Your Committee have heard the evidence of all the directors of the British South Africa Company, with the exception of Lord Grey. Of those who were examined Mr. Beit and Mr. Maguire alone had cognisance of Mr. Rhodes' plans. Mr. Beit played a prominent part in the negotiations with the Reform Union; he contributed large sums of money to the revolutionary movement, and must share full responsibility for the consequences.

"(5) There is not the slightest evidence that the late Commissioner in South Africa, Lord Rosmead, was made acquainted with Mr. Rhodes' plans. The evidence, on the contrary, shows that there was a conspiracy to keep all information on the subject away from him. The Committee must, however, express a strong opinion upon the conduct of Sir Graham Bower, who was guilty of a grave dereliction of duty in not communicating to the High Commissioner the information which had come to his knowledge. Mr. Newton failed in his duty in a like manner.

"(6) Neither the Secretary of State for the Colonies nor

any of the officials of the Colonial Office received any information which made them, or should have made them or any of them, aware of the plot during its development.

"(7) Finally, your Committee desire to put on record an absolute and unqualified condemnation of the Raid and of the plans which made it possible. The result caused for the time being grave injury to British influence in South Africa. Public confidence was shaken, race feeling embittered, and serious difficulties were created with neighbouring states."[1]

It is impossible to quote even such a summary as I have just given of Mr. Labouchere's Draft Report. He began by indicating the difficulties under which the Committee laboured:

"(1) Your Committee decided, in the first instance, to limit its inquiries into that portion of the matters submitted to it for investigation having relation to the Jameson Raid.

"(2) A considerable amount of oral and documentary evidence has been placed before it. But its task was rendered difficult. Some of the witnesses, who were either cognisant of the Jameson plan, or who took part in the Jameson Raid, displayed an unwillingness to make a clean breast of all that they knew, and in many instances witnesses refused to answer questions that the Committee considered might properly be put to them. Lord Rosmead could not be called as a witness on account of ill health, although Mr. Rhodes had referred to him in his evidence as able to answer questions, to which that gentleman was not willing to reply. Documents of the greatest importance, in possession of one of the witnesses, were not forthcoming,[2] nor was an opportunity given to all the members of your Committee to examine him as to the statement that he had made in evidence in connection with them, nor was he reported to your House for contumacy, with a view to your House taking action to

[1] *Times History of the War in South Africa*, vol. 1.

[2] The Hawkesley telegrams. These were subsequently published in the *Independence Belge*.

overcome it. It seemed probable from the evidence that much in regard to the document had been stated to the War Office, as a ground for its taking certain action with respect to the officers concerned in the Raid. But witnesses from that office were not examined as to these communications. Although these documents were in the hands of his solicitor, who informed your Committee that Mr. Rhodes claimed them as his property, and would not allow him to produce them, no direct application was made to Mr. Rhodes by your Committee to allow them to be produced. Other documents of a similar character were secured by your Committee only after Mr. Rhodes had left the country. He was not, consequently, examined in regard to their or as tenor, to his action in respect to them.

"(3) Owing to these causes your Committee cannot pretend to have become possessed of a perfect and full knowledge of everything connected with the Jameson plan and the Jameson Raid. It has consequently only been able to weigh evidence against evidence, and to deduce from what has been submitted to it the inferences that seem to flow therefrom."[1]

He proceeded to stigmatise, even more severely than the Report adopted by the Committee, the political conduct of Mr. Rhodes, for whom, in private, he had conceived considerable personal admiration. In paragraph 25 of Mr. Labouchere's Draft Report was this statement: "Your Committee is, however, of the opinion that they (Messrs. Rhodes and Beit) merit severe punishment. Mr. Rhodes is a Privy Councillor, he was a Cape Premier, and he was the autocrat of Rhodesia when the conspiracy that your Committee has investigated was in preparation, and when it was sought to carry it out. He deceived his Sovereign, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioner of South Africa, the Governor of the Cape Colony, his colleagues in the Cape Cabinet, the Board of the Chartered

[1] *Report from the Select Committee on British South Africa*, 1897.

Company, and the very persons whom he used as his instruments in his nefarious designs; and he abused the high positions which he held by engaging in a conspiracy, in a success of which his own pecuniary interests were largely involved, thus inflicting a slur on the hitherto unblemished honour of our public men at home and in our colonies. Mr. Beit is a German subject. In conjunction with Mr. Rhodes he fomented a revolution in a state in amity with us, and promoted an invasion of that state from British territory. These two men, the one a British statesman, the other a financier of German nationality, disgraced the good name of England, which it ought to be the object of all Englishmen to maintain pure and undefiled."

The only other important point in Mr. Labouchere's Draft Report was that referring to the alleged complicity of the Colonial Office in the Raid. While Mr. Labouchere admitted that the evidence in no way showed that any such complicity had existed, he regretted that the question had not been probed to the bottom, "because the slightest appearance of any indisposition to do this by your Committee may lead some persons erroneously to suppose that there may be some truth in the statements of witnesses connected with the Jameson plan that the secret aims of Mr. Rhodes were more or less clearly revealed to Mr. Chamberlain and to Mr. Fairfield."

He expressed himself very strongly in the following article on the Chartered Company in *Truth*:

If the events of the past week have not opened the eyes of Englishmen at large to the character of the patriots and heroes who have too long ruled the roost in South Africa, our boasted national common sense must indeed be a pitiful sham. What is the position? The South African Republic is a state originally brought into existence by the Boers treking from Cape Colony into the wilderness, and establishing themselves beyond what were then the limits of British colonisation. We tricked them once into surrendering their independence, merely reserving a suzerainty as against their right to conclude treaties with foreign

states without our consent. But since that was done, gold was discovered within their territory, and this has led to the migration of a vast number of English and men of other nationalities into the region where the Boer imagined that he was safe from pursuit. On the whole, these settlers, considering how unwelcome their presence must have been, have not been badly treated. The taxation is not excessive, and the condition of the mining industry is infinitely better than it is ever likely to be under the Chartered Company. Out of all those who have dabbled in Transvaal mining shares during the last year I wonder how many know the facts respecting the relation of the companies to the Government of the country. The Government charges on every mining claim a ground rent or royalty of 10s. a month. To a company owning fifty claims this means a ground rent of £300 a year—a very reasonable charge, when from thirty to sixty per cent. can be earned on the capital of the Company. As against this what do the Chartered Company charge? One half the net profits of all mines worked under their jurisdiction. This alone should teach shareholders of the Transvaal mines how little they have to gain from the overthrow of Boer Government by the Rhodes gang, and how thankful they may be for the course of events last week.

The non-Boer population, however, at Johannesburg and elsewhere have a genuine grievance on the question of the franchise and other rights of citizenship. In order to maintain their exclusive sovereignty in the land the Boers insist upon a fifteen years' residence for full naturalisation. . . . The period is too long, and it would be prudent on the part of the Boers to reduce it. There is no reason to suppose that they would refuse to do so, were the demands of the Uitlanders advanced in a regular manner. . . . But even were the Boers ever so deaf to justice and so blind to their own interests as to meet the Uitlander case with an obstinate *non possumus*, what pretext does this afford for armed intervention by the Chartered Company? A pretence it is true has been made that, before commencing their Raid, Jameson and his men resigned their positions under the Company; but even if such a form were gone through, it is obviously only a colourable pretence. The invading force was drilled, armed, and maintained by the Company. At its

head was the administrator of the Company. On his staff was the Company's generalissimo. It took with it the ammunition, equipment, and horses of the Company. . . . Neither in the political aims of the Uitlanders, nor the position of the Johannesburgers was there a shadow of justification for Jameson's Raid. . . . . The proceedings bear their character on their face and are of a piece with all that has gone before in the history of the Company. The design was to play the Matabele coup again on a bigger field. What was the origin of the Raid on Lobengula? The Company had obtained Lobengula's permission to occupy Mashonaland and dig there for gold, and had no further right beyond this. When occupied, Mashonaland was found to have no paying gold. The shares of the Company were unsalable rubbish. A pretext was therefore found for making war on Lobengula and seizing Matabeleland—a pretext as transparently dishonest as the pretext for the invasion of the Transvaal. All the circumstances showed in that case as in this, that the coup had been carefully prepared long beforehand. When the train had been laid, a quarrel was picked with the Matabele, who had entered Mashonaland at the Company's request, and they were attacked and shot down by this same Jameson while doing their best to retire in obedience to his orders. Instantly the whole of the Company's forces, all held in readiness, entered Matabeleland under the pretence that the Matabele and not the Company were the aggressors. Lobengula's savages were mowed down by thousands with Maxims. Those who were taken prisoners were killed off to save trouble. The envoys sent by the King to try and make terms were barbarously murdered. The King himself fled and died before he could be captured. His territory and the flocks and herds of his people were parcelled out among the Company and the band of freebooters who had been collected by promises of loot. One million new shares were created by Jameson's principals and colleagues, and, in the subsequent boom, shares were unloaded on the British public at prices ranging up to £8 per share. Matabeleland, however, has proved no richer in paying gold than Mashonaland. The shares have been going down again. What were the Chartered gang to do next? In the Transvaal there are extensive paying gold mines, and money which the gang would like to pocket is going elsewhere. Forth-

with the Chartered Company's forces are marshalled again. A sudden and obviously factitious agitation springs up at Johannesburg. Rumours of deadly peril to the alien population are put in circulation, goodness knows whence. The women and children are packed off—so it is said, but no one knows why or at whose instigation. Simultaneously a message imploring aid from the quaking citizens reaches Jameson, no one knows how, and in a moment the fighting doctor and his bold buccaneers are once more over the border. There, however, all resemblance between the two coups ends. The Chartered heroes have not to deal this time with naked half-armed savages, but with white men as well armed as themselves, and as well able to use their arms. There are Maxim guns on the other side this time and Krupp guns as well. Result: after a few hours' fighting, the conquerors of Matabeleland are killed or taken prisoners, and the doughty Jameson and his staff are lodged in Pretoria Gaol. I have no desire to exult over their fate. It is a shameful and abominable business all round, out of which no Englishman can extract a grain of satisfaction. But if ever men died with their blood on their own heads, they are the men who fell in this raid, and if ever prisoners of war deserved scant mercy, Jameson and his comrades are those prisoners. They may thank their stars that they have fallen into the hands of men who are not likely to treat them as they themselves treated the Matabele wounded and prisoners.[1]

He continued his attack in a serious of articles. The burden of his argument was always the impurity of motive arising from the financial interest involved. "What a comment on our morality," he writes on April 2, "has been our action during the last few months! We quarrelled with the Americans about Venezuela about a bog in which we fancied there might be gold; we remain in Egypt because we are looking after the interest on Egyptian bonds, and finding salaries for a herd of English employees; we are engaged in a Soudan Expedition because Dongola is fertile, and its possession will afford a plea to us to violate our pledges to leave

[1] *Truth*, Jan. 9, 1896.

Egypt; we are disputing with President Kruger because he has fallen out with a crew of company mongers; we are backing up a company in Rhodesia because its shares have been put up to a high premium on the Stock Exchange. But, pledged as we are to see that there is good government in Armenia, we are supinely looking on whilst Armenian men are being slaughtered, Armenian women ravished, and Armenian villages burnt. Why? Because there is no money to be made in protecting Armenians, and our financiers have no interests in Armenia."[1]

Mr. Labouchere thought, rightly or wrongly, that the Imperialism of Mr. Rhodes was little more than a mask to cover the desire for financial expansion. Not that he thought badly of Mr. Rhodes personally. He thought that he deceived himself in perfectly good faith. While he detested his aims, he could not help admiring the energy and skill with which they were promoted, and something simple and direct in the character of the man himself.

The estimate I had formed of Mr. Labouchere's opinion of Mr. Rhodes as a private individual was recently confirmed by the following extract from a letter which I received from Mr. Charles Boyd containing a reminiscence of an interview he had with Mr. Labouchere in 1897:

That was the year [he wrote] of the British South Africa Commission of which he (Mr. Labouchere) was a member, and which, as George Wyndham's Secretary, I regularly attended; he was, of course, very much "over the way," in Mr. Jaggers's sense, to what one may call the Imperialist view of the South African question. It was, I think, in May, or, at all events, near the end of the sitting of the Commission, that I conceived the spirited notion of offering myself for the post of Imperial Secretary to the High Commissioner for South Africa, Sir Alfred Milner, then recently appointed; though without official experience, I had some good backers on the strength of some little

[1] *Truth*, April 2, 1896.

study of the South African problem. Among these was one of the kindest of men, the late Mr. Moberley Bell, manager of the *Times*, with whom one morning I sat in his house in Portland Place considering that forlorn hope, as it most properly proved to be of my ambition. "The only thing is," said Mr. Bell, "what are you going to do with Labby? You know you are a child of the opposite camp." I agreed with gloom that, if I had any chance, and Mr. Labouchere "took notice," my antecedents might not be a recommendation. The imperial South African Association was then about a year old, and active and formidable enough to have caught the eye of *Truth*. Mr. Bell, leaning his big head on his big hand, had a benevolent inspiration. "If I were you," he said, "I 'd jump into the nearest hansom and drive straight to 5 Old Palace Yard. It 's a sort of move he may quite well love. You will be 'squaring Labby,'" and Mr. Bell dismissed me with his blessing. Yet a little and somewhat nervous-like I stood in the presence of your Uncle, in that wonderful room which you will so well remember giving on the green turf of the Abbey precincts. I stated my case, and displayed one or two testimonials, including that of his friend Sir Charles Dilke. "And now," said I indignantly, "if I do have any chance, I am told that I am in danger of *Truth*." "Nothing of the kind," said Mr. Labouchere. "I have, to begin with, a considerable admiration for George Wyndham, and, as for yourself, your having the nerve to come straight to me is sufficient proof of your fitness for the Imperial Secretaryship or for anything else," and with a graceful movement of his wrist he disengaged some cigarettes from a sort of gilded network basket of the same, which depended from the wall, and bade me sit down and smoke. He talked of the Commission, and asked me what I thought of the evidence of Mr. Rhodes, with whom, of course, he had considerably crossed swords, not to say whom he had bated. I expressed, possibly with an air of defiance, an extreme sense of Mr. Rhodes' candour. "But bless you," said Mr. Labouchere, "I know all that as well as you. I like Rhodes, I like his porter and sandwiches. An entirely honest, heavy person. On the other hand, did you ever see anything so fatuous as the performance of H——?" Presently he returned to my candidature, and said, "I 'd better write you a testimonial myself, and that will allay your fears. . . "

As is well known, the troubles of South Africa did not come to an end with the settlement of the Jameson Raid. The aggrieved Uitlanders had not availed themselves, when it came to the point, of Dr. Jameson's action, and their unredressed grievances—that they suffered from serious grievances was admitted even by Mr. Labouchere—festered in their minds and produced, as time went on, deeper and more widespread dissatisfaction. Nor was the appointment in 1897 of Sir Alfred (now Lord) Milner as British Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa by Mr. Chamberlain, who had taken office under Lord Salisbury as Colonial Secretary, calculated to allay the resentment of the Boers, his Imperialist sympathies being well known. Towards the end of 1898, Sir Alfred Milner left South Africa for England. He was away for three months, and during his absence several things occurred to hasten the unfortunate crisis—the outbreak of war. General Sir William Butler had been selected to fill the chief military command in South Africa, left vacant by the sudden death of Sir William Goodenough. Sir William Butler, immediately on his arrival in South Africa, allowed his sympathy with the Afrikander party to be very apparent. He was convinced that the English population of the Transvaal had no real grievances, and were only striving to make mischief. When Sir Alfred Milner returned to the Cape, on February 14, 1899, he was faced by a very different situation to the one he had left. In almost all the towns of Cape Colony and Natal meetings had been held by the Colonists protesting against the continuation of the existing state of affairs in the Transvaal, and demanding the intervention of the Imperial Government. Dutch feeling was no less agitated. Among the extreme section of Afrikanders everywhere a movement was on foot for the formation of a National League which should bind together all Afrikanders in strenuous opposition to any attempt of the Imperial power to intervene in South African affairs.[1]

[1] *Times' History of the War in South Africa*, vol. ii.

In England, the first indication of what was coming was revealed to the discerning public who read Parliamentary reports by the publication of the army estimates, in which a sum not exceeding £1,211,900 was asked for to cover the military expenses (March, 1899–March, 1900). Mr. Dillon asked why it was considered necessary to increase so enormously our forces in South Africa. The Colonial Secretary (Mr. Chamberlain) replied to the effect that the Transvaal Republic, which borders on the colony of Natal and Cape Colony, had enormously increased their offensive or defensive forces within the last few years. They had spent large sums in forts, artillery, and rifles, and millions of cartridges had been imported. Therefore, as long as the British Government was responsible for the peace in South Africa, a like increase of warlike preparation was necessary on our part. Mr. Labouchere replied aptly that the increased defensive measures adopted by the Boers had only followed upon the scandalous and outrageous raid which had been made upon their country by the minions of the Chartered Company. Then a paragraph appeared in the *Times* to the effect that the Commander-in-Chief had been engaged in completing the organisation and composition of the "larger force which it will be necessary to dispatch to South Africa in the event of the negotiations at present in progress with the Government of the Transvaal proving unsuccessful." Mr. Labouchere asked, on July 7, whether the officers mentioned in this *communiqué* as going to South Africa to organise the forces, were to go into Cape Colony and into Natal to organise them, and, if so, whether it was with the consent of the Ministers of those Colonies? To which question Mr. Balfour replied "I do not know."[1]

On October 17, Mr. Dillon moved an amendment to the Address in answer to the Queen's Speech, praying for arbitration to settle the difficulties between the two Governments, so that "an ignominious war may be avoided between the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. 74, July 7, 1899.

overwhelming forces of your Majesty's Empire and those of two small nations numbering in all less than 200,000 souls." Mr. Labouchere seconded the amendment, and pleaded eloquently for arbitration, suggesting President McKinley as the best arbitrator possible. The peroration of his speech was excellent, but, alas, it fell at the time upon ears already eagerly alert for no other sounds than the music of triumphant victory and glorious marches home after a course of deeds of valour, which the mere fact of British nationality was to render as easy of achievement as an afternoon's football. It reads now with a different ring, and testifies to the spirit of justice and temperance which were so characteristic of all his policy in those crises when the English nation gets stirred up, as it sometimes does, to a spirit of hysterical enthusiasn, in comparison with which the excitability and nervous agitation of the "foreigner" is a mere joke. "I confess that I feel very sorry for the end of these unfortunate Boers," he said. "They are fathers of families, they are farmers, honest and ignorant if you like. They are fighting for that which they believe to be the holiest and most noble of causes—their homesteads and their country. We must all regret that their country is not only turned into a battlefield, but that a number of these men, the breadwinners of families, will be slain. For my part, I cannot accept the responsibility of contenting myself with merely washing my hands of an injustice like this. It might be a very politic thing to say: 'There is a feeling in favour of war; I protest against it, but I wash my hands of it, and shall criticise hereafter the conduct of the Colonial Secretary.' I have not criticised the conduct of the right hon. gentleman in this matter except indirectly, because that is not the question of the moment. The question is to do the best we can to put an end to this war, and that is why I have seconded, and why I would venture to urge the House to agree to the amendment which has been moved, because then the war would cease in a very few days."[1]

[1] *Hansard*, vol. 77, Oct. 17, 1899.

On October 20, Mr. Labouchere pointed out that, although the total cost of our army is £22,000,000, we are "positively" spending £10,000,000 in sending troops to South Africa." He added, with some truth, that, as the Government had a majority, to ask the House to vote against these proceedings was useless. But he declared that, in his opinion, before the war was over, it would cost the country a hundred millions. A burst of laughter and ironical cheering from the Ministerialists greeted the statement of the member for Northampton. They all imagined that Buller would be in Pretoria before Christmas, and that there would even be some change out of the ten millions voted. What a chill would have fallen over that light-hearted assembly if some hand had written on the wall at that moment the real sum which the South African enterprise so gaily entered upon would cost the nation! Something well over two hundred millions did not cover it.[1]

In March 1900, the War Loan Bill raising a sum of thirty-five millions was passed through both Houses of Parliament. The events of the war which had taken place by this time were, briefly, these: The British dispatch which led up to the Boer ultimatum was presented in Pretoria on September 25, and the mobilisation of the Boers commenced on the 27th. The Transvaal ultimatum was presented to the British agent on October 9, and the war began upon the 11th. At the end of the first fortnight the English claimed the victories of Talana and Elandslaagte, whilst the Boers could boast that they had swept the whole of Natal down to Ladysmith. At Pretoria there was great jubiliation, and the highest expectations of success for the farmers' arms were entertained. Before Christmas the defeats of Nicholson's Nek, Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso had plunged England into depths of gloom. The investment of Ladysmith had been completed, and the first stage of the war marked by the advance of the Boers into British territory was over.

[1] Henry W. Lucy, *The Balfourian Parliament.*

On the 22nd of December, Lord Roberts had set sail from Southampton to the Cape. To him the British Government had turned in its hour of need to restore the shaken prestige of the British army and to bring the war to a successful conclusion. Their confidence was justified, though the conclusion of the war was still far distant. The horrible disaster of Spion Kop occurred in January, but the middle of March saw Lord Roberts in Bloemfontein. Ladysmith and Kimberley had been relieved, and the whole vast territory south of these points was in uncontested occupation of the British troops.

In Mr. Labouchere's speech of March 13, on the occasion of the second reading of the War Loan Bill, he had pleaded eloquently for a cessation of hostilities in South Africa. The Boers, he said, had now been driven out of British territory, but the only terms upon which the British Government would make peace were degrading to a brave and honest people, namely the surrendering of their independence, and the blotting of their nationality out of existence. "Can you tell me of any war," he asked, "in which the vanquished side asked for terms and were told that the victors would grant terms only in the capital of the defeated country, and on condition of their surrendering their independence? I call this thing an iniquity, and a disgrace to this country to propose such terms. Perhaps the question of iniquity does not appeal to hon. gentlemen opposite. It is not only a crime—it is a blunder. I do not believe this is a way to establish peace and harmony and good feeling in South Africa. . . . You are at present appealing to the lowest passions outside of this House. I do not believe you will succeed in the long run; it may be that the people will be carried away by the feeling which at present exists among Englishmen, but they will soon see that they have been fooled into this war by the vilest body of financiers that ever existed in this world, and that the opportunity had been taken to lay hold of the territory and gold, which Lord Salisbury himself boasted we did not wish for."[1]

[1] *Hansard*, vol. 80, March 13, 1900.

There is no doubt that Mr. Labouchere was extremely unpopular in England during 1900. It was difficult for the man in the street to separate his political attitude, with regard to the war, from that of the Irish Nationalists, with whose policy he had been so long identified, and who welcomed the war as supplying fresh food for their campaign of denunciation against the British Government, and who openly expressed their exultation at the Boer successes. Mr. Labouchere did not rejoice at the British humiliation. The point that he always had in view was the prevention of more bloodshed, and the injustice of the annexation of new territory by the force of numerical superiority. Further, he considered that the negotiations which took place in the summer and autumn of 1899, before the outbreak of war, had not been carried on with fairness towards the Boers. After the President of the Transvaal Republic had agreed to a seven years' Franchise Law, retrospective in its action, for the colonists, Mr. Chamberlain took exception to a provision of the new Bill, which required that the alien desirous of burghership should produce a certificate of continuous registration during the period for naturalisation. He suggested further that the details of the scheme should be discussed by delegates appointed by Sir Alfred Milner and the Transvaal Government (July 27). The Transvaal Government, as it had a perfect right to do, instead of immediately accepting Mr. Chamberlain's suggestion, submitted alternative proposals to the British Government, which gave most liberal concessions to the Uitlanders, the details of which were to be discussed with the British agent at Pretoria. To these proposals were attached certain conditions, one of which was that "Her Majesty's Government will not insist further upon the assertion of suzerainty, the controversy on the subject being tacitly allowed to drop" (August 19). Mr. Conynghame Greene, the British agent at Pretoria, wired the Boer proposals and conditions to Sir Alfred Milner. Sir Alfred Milner wired to Mr. Conynghame Greene in reply: "If

the South African Republic should reply to the invitation to a joint enquiry put forward by Her Majesty's Government by formally making the proposals described in your telegram, such a course would not be regarded by Her Majesty's Government as a refusal of their offer, but they would be prepared to consider the reply of the South African Republic on its merits."

In Mr. Labouchere's opinion, it was at this point of the negotiations that the disingenuousness of Mr. Chamberlain's action was most apparent. The formal reply of Her Majesty's Government to the Boer proposals was delivered on August 30. It declared that the Boer proposals were accepted, but that the British Government utterly refused to consider the conditions attached to them. It was obvious now that the Boers had no other course open to them but to fall back upon the Commission proposed by Mr. Chamberlain on July 27, and to which their proposals and conditions were the alternative, and, according to Sir Alfred Milner's wire to Mr. Conynghame Greene, understood by both Governments as such. On September 2, therefore, they asked for further information as to the Joint Committee which they were now *par force majeure* and *faute de mieux* prepared to accept. The reply they received on September 12 was that "H. M. Government have been compelled to regard the last proposal of the Government of the South African Republic as unacceptable in the form in which it was presented"; that they "cannot now consent to go back to the proposal for which those in the note of the Government of the Republic of August 19 are intended as a substitute"; and that, if those proposals of the Transvaal Government, taken by themselves and without the conditions attached by that Government, are not agreed to, "H. M. Government must reserve to themselves the right to reconsider the situation *de novo* and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement." On September 15, the Secretary of State of the Transvaal Republic replied that he learned with deep

regret of the withdrawal of the invitation to a joint enquiry. The proposal of August 19, made by him in the name of his Government, involved the danger of affecting the independence of the Republic, but his Government had set against this danger the advantage of obtaining the assurances mentioned in the conditions. He protested against the injustice of being asked to grant the original proposals without the conditions annexed, and he could not understand Mr. Chamberlain's present refusal to accept the Commission which was his own alternative. The reply of the Republic consequently was that it could not grant the first half of the August 19 offer without the second, but would accept the Joint Commission which had been proposed by Mr. Chamberlain; that it welcomed the introduction of a Court of Arbitration, and was willing to help in its formation, but that it was not clear what were the subjects mentioned as outside the Court of Arbitration, and it deprecated the foreshadowing of new proposals without specification. Mr. Reitz finally implored the acceptance of the Joint Commission, as "if H. M.'s Government are willing and able to make this decision it will put an end to the present state of tension, race hatred would decrease and die out, the prosperity and welfare of the South African Republic and of the whole of South Africa would be developed and furthered, and fraternisation between the different nationalities would increase." On September 25 Mr. Chamberlain replied that no conditions less comprehensive than the final offer of H. M. Government could be relied upon to effect the object for which they had been striving. The dispatch concluded with these words: "H. M. Government will communicate to the High Commissioner the result of their deliberations in a later dispatch." On September 30 the British agent at Pretoria telegraphed by request of the Secretary of State of the Republic to ask what decision had been taken by the British Government. Mr. Chamberlain replied on October 2 that "the dispatch of H. M. Government is being prepared

but will not be ready for some days." In the meantime Parliament had been summoned to grant supplies, the Reserves were called out, and ships were chartered to convey all available troops to South Africa. From September 27 to October 8 the President of the Orange Free State telegraphed frequently to Sir Alfred Milner. He complained of the concentration of troops on the frontiers of his State and of the Transvaal, again and again proferred his good offices to avoid all possibility of war, and in almost every telegram urged that Her Majesty's Government should at once make known the "precise nature and scope of the concessions or measures, the adoption whereof Her Majesty's Government consider themselves entitled to claim, or which they suggest as being necessary or sufficient to secure a satisfactory and permanent solution of existing differences between them and the South African Republic, whilst at the same time providing a means for settling any others that may arise in the future." To this request Sir Alfred Milner made no reply.[1] On October 9 the famous Ultimatum was presented to the British agent at Pretoria. Amongst other plain statements it contained words to the effect that the Transvaal felt obliged to regard the military force in the neighbourhood of its frontiers as a threat against the Republic, and that it became necessary to ask Her Majesty's Government to give an assurance that no further troops should be landed in South Africa, that troops on the borders of the Republic should be withdrawn either by friendly arbitration or some other amicable way. In the event of a refusal the Secretary of State of the Transvaal must regard the action of Her Majesty's Government as a formal declaration of war. War broke out, as has been said, on October 11.

When Lord Roberts marched triumphantly into Pretoria on the 9th of June, some important letters were found in the capital of the Transvaal out of which great political interest was made against the group of Englishmen, of

[1] *Truth*, Sept. 13, 1899.

whom Labouchere was one of the most important, who were known as the "little Englanders" in contradistinction to the ever growing numbers of "Imperialists." These letters were sent to Mr. Chamberlain, and a correspondence on the subject ensued between him and Mr. Labouchere. Mr. Labouchere published the whole of it in *Truth*, prefacing the letters with the following remarks:[1]

"The correspondence which I print below speaks for itself. I had not supposed that I was one of the three M. P.'s whose letters had fallen into the hands of Mr. Chamberlain, as I do not think that I ever wrote to any one in Pretoria. But I did, before the war, both write and talk to Mr. Montagu White, the Transvaal representative in London, and it would seem that he sent some of my letters to Pretoria. What there is requiring explanation in either my conversations or correspondence I do not know. The advice which I gave to Mr. White was that his Government should make reasonable concessions, and should gain time, in order to tide over the false impression created by Mr. Chamberlain's appeal to the passions which had been excited by statements in regard to Boer rule derived from the 'kept' Rhodesian press in South Africa and the correspondents of the English newspapers, who were nearly all connected with that 'kept press' and with the Rhodes gang. Had my advice been followed, there would have been no war. The difficulty which stood in the way of its being adopted was that President Kruger and other leading Boers were fully convinced that Mr. Chamberlain had been in the counsels of the Jameson-Rhodes conspirators of 1895, and that—no matter what concessions the Transvaal might make—he was determined to have his revenge for President Kruger having got the better of him on that occasion."

Here is the correspondence:

Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Labouchere

COLONIAL OFFICE, Aug. 6, 1900.

SIR,—I beg to call your attention to the enclosed copy of a letter from Mr. Montagu White, with copies of two letters pur-

[1] *Truth*, Aug. 23, 1900.

porting to have been written by you, and to inquire if you desire to offer any explanations or observations with regard to them.—I am, Sir, Your obedient,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

(*Enclosure*) *Mr. Montagu White to Dr. Reitz*[1]

58 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON,
Aug. 4, 1899

DEAR DR. REITZ,—I feel tired and done for to-night. It is past six o'clock and I still have forty miles to go before I get home. My inclination is to wire to you, asking you to tell the British Government to go to the devil and to do their "darnedest." It is perfectly sickening the way one is kept in a continual state of suspense and nervous excitement. Everything is as quiet as possible on the surface, and there has been a tremendous decrease in press cuttings which is a sure sign that matters are relapsing into a normal condition. But I have been able to judge of the effect upon our friends of hints that we may not be able to accept the proposed Commission. Without exception, they are one and all dead against our refusing it, and all agree that we shall have to face a very serious crisis if we refuse the proposal, and that without the friendly support of the majority of the newspapers which have hitherto been on our side. Spender of the *Chronicle*, who has fought consistently and well for us, tells me that none of them can understand in what way we shall be worse off for accepting the Commission, for (if) your people disagree about the finding of the report what can Mr. Chamberlain do further? Even our best friends say that by rejecting the report of the Industrial Commission two years ago, we have allowed things to go so far that it is unwise to talk of intermeddling in our home affairs as a refusal to entertain what public opinion here endorses as a fair proposal. The essence of friendly advice is: Accept the proposal in principle, point out how difficult it will be to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to statistics, etc., and how undesirable it would be to have a miscarriage of the Commission. In other words: gain as much time as you can, and give the public time here to get out of the dangerous frame of mind which Chamber-

[1] Secretary of State of the Transvaal Republic.

lain's speeches have created. Spender is of opinion that after two months' delay all danger will have vanished. I cannot say I share his optimistic views, for this sort of thing has been going on for three years. Labouchere said to me this morning: "Don't for goodness sake, let Mr. Kruger make his first mistake by refusing this; a little skilful management, and he will give Master Joe another fall." He further said: "You are such past masters in the art of gaining time, here is an opportunity; you surely have n't let your right hands lose their cunning, and you ought to spin out the negotiations for quite two or three months." I must leave off now. Please remember one thing: I do not send you *my* advice. I send you the opinions of friends and the tendency of public feeling here.

Some one sent me some lines parodying R. Kipling's *Lest We Forget*. I got it published in *Truth*.—Yours very truly,

MONTAGU WHITE.

(*Enclosure*) *Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Montagu White*

5 OLD PALACE YARD, S.W., Aug. 2, 1899.

DEAR MR. MONTAGU WHITE,—You will see the lines in *Truth*. I have altered one or two words to make the grammar all right. I do hope that President Kruger will manage to accept in some form or another the reference (proposed conference). Bannerman and all our Front Bench believe that it is only a way devised by the Cabinet to let Joe climb down. The new Franchise Act stands. The *onus probandi* of showing that it does not give substantial representation to the Uitlanders and yet leave the Boers masters is with Chamberlain. The difference between five and seven years is not a ground for proof. The details for registration do not prove it. Let President Kruger quote our Registration Laws, which you had better send him, and do not forget that a lodger has to register every year; he is not automatically on the Franchise list. In connection with this, Milner suggested in his dispatch six years. He afterwards said that six was a mistake for five. But Chamberlain in his reply approved of six. It is impossible to calculate the effect without knowing how many Outlanders there are, and how long each has been in the country. To discover the basis of inquiry would take a long time. As the

decision would go by the majority, the question would be on the Chairman, who would have a casting vote. Surely it could be arranged with Natal; the Cape and the Orange Free State, as well as the Transvaal, should be represented, with the Chairman an Englishman who has not yet expressed an opinion.

My own impression is that comparatively few will ever become Boers amongst the English; they will not like to give up their nationality. The President has a great opportunity to give Joe another fall. If at the same time the Dynamite Concession is abrogated there will be a rise in many shares, and this will be regarded as a barometer that everything is going on well and satisfactorily. The great thing is to gain time. In a few months we shall be howling about something in another part of the world. —Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

(*Enclosure*) *Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Montagu White*

5 Old Palace Yard, S. W., Aug. 4, 1899.

Dear Mr. White,—It is the general opinion that Chamberlain "climbed down." As Bannerman put it to me: "His speech was a little bluster of his own with the main parts arranged by his colleagues, and they sat by like policemen to see that he read them." As a matter of fact he did read all the important parts.

If the President agrees to the Committee it will, under clever tactics, take months to settle conditions, and then it will take further months to come to a decision. If the basis is established that there shall be a substantial representation of the Uitlanders, yet not such as can endanger the majority of the Boers, no harm can well come of the Commission. The only difficulty is that it is a sort of recognition of our right to meddle. But this might be avoided in two ways: (1) By getting Schreiner into it and making it a sort of South African affair; (2) by making a bargain and agreeing only on the understanding that there should be arbitration on all matters affecting the true reading of the Convention. But if the latter is proposed then the President should put in some proposal for the Chief Justices and one Imperial Judge or Governor to be the tribunal.

The universal opinion is that the Cabinet has forced all this

upon Chamberlain, and that they are determined not to have war and to do something to let him down easily. Salisbury's speech was conceived on these lines, and a little vague bluster but nothing more. I accentuated Bannerman's declaration about hostilities; this pledges the Liberal party against war.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

Mr. Labouchere to Mr. Chamberlain

HOTEL AND PENSION WALDHAUS,
VULPERA TARASP, ENGADIN SCHWEIZ, Aug. 18, 1900.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge your letter of Aug. 6, enclosing copy of a letter of Mr. Montagu White, with copies of two letters "purporting to have been written by me," and inquiring if I desire to offer any explanation or observations with regard to them.

For what I may have written or said to Mr. Montagu White I am responsible to the House of Commons, of which I am a member; to my constituents who have done me the honour to send me there; and to the law. To you I owe no sort of explanation. I ascribe, therefore, your invitation to furnish you with one in respect to the enclosed letters to the singular illusion that no matter what course you may see fit to adopt, whether as a Conservative or a Liberal Minister, all owe you a personal explanation who take the liberty to disapprove of it, and to do their best to prevent its bringing us into unnecessary hostilities with some foreign power. Whilst not recognising this pretension on your part, I will, however, offer you some observations in regard to these letters, as you apparently desire that I should do so.

The letters of mine enclosed were, I do not doubt, written by me. The only exception that I have to take to the copies is that a few of the words in them are, I should fancy, erroneously copied, as they do not make sense. The advice tendered in them seems to me to be excellent, and I know of no reason why I should not have addressed it to Mr. White, who was then the representative of a country with which we were at peace. Many letters passed before the War between that gentleman and myself. He was most desirous that all possibility of war should be removed, and

that harmony and good feeling should be established on a firm basis between Great Britain and the Transvaal. This we both thought could only be effected by a full recognition of the Convention of 1884, as explained by Lord Derby, who signed it for Great Britain, and by reasonable concessions on the part of the Transvaal Government in regard to the naturalisation and electoral franchise of the Uitlanders domiciled in the Republic. I therefore suggested that the Transvaal Government should grant to such domiciled aliens naturalisation and electoral franchise of the Uitlanders on precisely the same terms as they are granted to aliens in Great Britain. A law thus framed would, I thought, not be open to objection on your part, and would put an end to all the carping criticisms raised by you in respect to small and unimportant details in the concessions that you were forcing on the Transvaal in regard to these matters, and which seemed to me hardly calculated to bring about a peaceful solution of the situation. If I remember rightly the last letters exchanged between Mr. White and myself were just before the close of the normal session of Parliament last year. Mr. White in his letter informed me that he had received a communication from Mr. Reitz, the Transvaal Sec. of State, in which that gentleman told him that, although he had always been a strong advocate for all reasonable reforms in respect of the Uitlanders, and although he had used all his influence to promote a peaceful solution of the pending issues between the two countries, your despatches were so persistently insulting in their tone, and all concessions made by his Government were so invariably met by you with fresh demands, that even the most moderate of the Transvaal Burghers were becoming convinced that you were determined to oblige them either to surrender at discretion to all that you might demand, or to defend by arms the position secured to the Transvaal by the Convention of 1884. He therefore suggested that the negotiations should be taken in hand by Lord Salisbury, in which case he was convinced that a settlement satisfactory to both sides would be easily come to. As I entirely agreed with this opinion of Mr. Reitz, and believed that you were the chief impediment to such a settlement, I replied to Mr. White that the tenor of Mr. Reitz's communication should be conveyed to a leading member of the Cabinet, and that

I hoped—although I did not expect—that the suggestion would bear fruit.

As I gathered from your observations in the House of Commons that you had not made up your mind whether you would publish the letters of Members of Parliament to Transvaal authorities that had fallen into your hands, I will—so far as my letters are concerned—relieve you of further consideration by publishing them myself, together with this correspondence. I have often urged that the public should have the advantage of a full knowledge of all documents which are likely to enable them to form a sound judgment in respect to the issues that have arisen in South Africa. Might I, with all respect, venture to suggest to you that you should follow my example? The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (whoever he may be) and Her Majesty's representatives in foreign capitals correspond not only by despatches, but by what they are pleased to term "private letters," which are to all intents and purposes despatches. I presume that the same course is usual between Secretaries of State for the Colonies and Her Majesty's Colonial Governors. You have announced that you are in favour of a "new diplomacy" in which nothing is kept back from the public. Would it be too much to ask you to inaugurate the "new diplomacy" by publishing all the so-called private letters that have been exchanged between you and the Governors of Natal and the Cape Colony; and all the letters and despatches exchanged between these Governors and our military commanders in South Africa, of which you may have copies? Without these documents it is impossible that either the House of Commons or the electors of the United Kingdom can form a true conclusion in regard to the "diplomacy" that led to the war, or be able to affix the responsibility on the right shoulders in respect to our lack of preparation for hostilities in South Africa and our initial reverses. If it is too much to hope that you will act on this suggestion, I would venture to urge that at least you should publish the correspondence between yourself and Mr. Hawksley in regard to your alleged knowledge of the contemplated Rhodes–Jameson conspiracy of 1894. Mr. Hawksley is still, and then was, the solicitor of the Chartered Company of South Africa, and is a close friend and confidant of Mr. Rhodes. When the Parliamentary Com-

mittee of Inquiry into all connected with the conspiracy was sitting, Mr. Hawksley was a witness. He alluded to this correspondence. But when I wished to examine him about it—which was my right as a member of the Committee according to Parliamentary usage—this was not permitted by the Committee. After the Report of the Committee was published Mr. Hawksley made public his conviction that, if this correspondence saw the light, a guilty knowledge of the conspiracy would be brought home to you. When the debate on the Report took place in the House of Commons, he placed the correspondence in the hands of a member with instructions to read it if you made any attack upon Mr. Rhodes. Far, however, from doing this, you went out of your way to assert that Mr. Rhodes had done nothing to invalidate his rights to be considered an honourable man, although only a few days before you had agreed to a report in which he was branded as having been guilty of dishonourable conduct. Since then, again and again, you have been asked to produce the correspondence. But this you have persistently refused to do, although no public interest could suffer by the production. Yet, if Mr. Hawksley is wrong in the inference he deduces from the correspondence, it is obvious that its publication would go far to allay the suspicion which led President Kruger to doubt your desire for a peaceful solution of the strained relations that existed between Her Majesty's Government and that of the Transvaal Republic, and which even now militates against all good feeling between the colonists of South Africa of British and Dutch origin.

I trust that you will excuse my venturing to make these suggestions. I do so because I heartily agree with you as to the desirability of the "new diplomacy." It is the only way in which that popular control can be established over the Executive which is essential in a self-governing community, if it is to escape from falling under the domination of some purely unscrupulous adventurer gifted with a ready tongue.

I believe with my leader, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, that the war might and ought to have been avoided, and I cannot help hoping that my letters which have fallen into your hands will show you that I laboured to the best of my ability in order that it should be avoided. Unfortunately these efforts were not

successful. The war was commenced under a lamentable ignorance on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers of the resistance which the two Dutch Republics would oppose to our arms. Reverses followed owing to the meddling of civilians in military matters. Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Bloemfontein are in our hands. The Orange River Free State has been annexed. The Transvaal Republic has been annexed. Under these circumstances peace and prosperity can only be restored in South Africa when all suspicion is removed that the Secretary of State for the Colonies was actuated by his previous relations with the Rhodes-Jameson conspiracy in forcing a war. I am sure, too, that you will agree with me that it will not be right for the electors of the United Kingdom to be called upon to pronounce an opinion on the policy of a war which has cost us thousands of valuable lives and tens of millions of money, as well as on the mode in which the war has been conducted, until all that can enable them to arrive at a conclusion has seen the light.—I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

H. LABOUCHERE.

P. S.—If you desire to offer any explanations or observations with regard to your action in respect to South Africa, they will receive due consideration.

The Rt. Hon. J. Chamberlain, etc., etc.

Mr. Labouchere wisely remarked at about this period of the South African War: "War is war. The old Greek line holds good that in war the great ones go mad, and the people where it takes place weep. This must inevitably always be the case." With equal force, but less elegance, he also remarked: "I do not waste my time in answering abuse. I am accustomed to it and I thrive under it like a field that benefits by the manure that is carted on to it." He must have thriven exceedingly during the summer of 1900, for the amount of abuse collected and thrown over him was phenomenal. Most of it was extracted from the most shadowy appearances of fact possible. The Conference, or Commission, referred to in the Pretoria correspondence, was

understood by papers of quite high standing, such even as the *Birmingham Post*, to be the Bloemfontein Conference, the abortive proceedings of which had come to an end early in June, 1899. Nevertheless, Mr. Labouchere was accused by the press of having, in his letters to Mr. Montagu White, elaborated a scheme, to make the conference at Bloemfontein not only a failure, but a deliberately planned sham. With regard to the cry of treason which was raised against him indiscriminately, the dates on the letters—even had his communications been of a treasonable nature—rendered such a charge childish in the extreme.

As soon as Mr. Labouchere received Mr. Chamberlain's letter with its enclosures, which followed him to the retired Swiss Valley where he was spending his holiday, he wrote at once to the leader of his party telling him of what had occurred. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was spending August at Marienbad, and wrote him the following letter in reply:

MARIENBAD, Aug. 22, 1900.

MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—I am much interested in your story, and shall look forward to my *Truth* with extra avidity. All you describe was perfectly proper and legitimate this time last year, or indeed at any time: and where high treason comes in I cannot see. My little facetiousness will do the great man no harm if it is published. I remember the fact perfectly. All the while the statesman was speaking, Aaron-Balfour and Hur-Hicks Beach were not holding up his hands, but watching, with anxious faces, his every word.

Mark Lockwood, who is here, told me that you were one culprit, and that the other was no other than the ingenuous John Ellis, who was guilty of writing to some lady asking whether the stories of strange doings under martial law were authentic! If this is all one may exclaim *tantæne animis cælestibus iræ?* Can our Sec. of State be so small-minded!

What a gorgeous palace you are living in! It quite eclipses anything here, even in your favourite St. John's Wood quarter.

They are all there: at least a fair representation, ready for Him. But alas He does not come. Weather superb here, but not much company to amuse or interest.—Yours,

H. C. B.

The war dragged on until the May of 1902, when the Boers were obliged to make peace, not so much on account of the military situation as because the burghers were weary of fighting and wanted to lay down their arms. And what else could be expected of them? Half the national army were prisoners of war, nearly four thousand had been killed, the rest were weakening and dwindling hourly, twenty thousand women and children had died in the concentration camps, thousands more were perishing on the veld. There was no help from Cape Colony, no help from Europe, no help from the sympathetic minority in England itself.[1] The national representatives of the South African Republic and the Orange Free State were given three days in which to consider the conditions of peace which were put before them by Sir Alfred Milner, and which they were told were absolutely final. Their answer was given on the 31st, at five minutes past eleven, only an hour before the expiry of the term of grace. The last few moments of their conference were occupied by President Schalk Burger, who closed the melancholy meeting with these words:

"We are standing here at the grave of the two Republics. Much yet remains to be done, although we shall not be able to do it in the official capacities which we have formerly occupied. Let us not draw our hands back from the work which it is our duty to accomplish. Let us ask God to guide us, and to show us how we shall be able to keep our nation together. We must be ready to forgive and forget whenever we meet our brethren. That part of our nation which has proved unfaithful we must not reject."

In considering the part Mr. Labouchere played in the

[1] *Times' History of the War in South Africa*, vol. v.

discussions that took place in Parliament and in the press, during the pitiful struggle, no attitude but one of admiration for his consistency and envy of his courage can be maintained for a moment. This chapter cannot be better closed than with a repetition of his own words, expressed valiantly at the moment when he was of all men in England perhaps, the most unpopular: "The best settlement that can be made now will be worse for all parties than the settlement which could have been effected by tact and self-restraint had the Boers never been goaded into war. I adhere to everything that I have ever said as to the causes that brought on this war, with all its disastrous results. I retract not one word that I have published in *Truth*, or spoken in Parliament, or written in any letter, or uttered in any shape or form about the Chamberlain diplomacy and the Chamberlain war."[1]

[1] *Truth*, Sept. 6, 1900.

CHAPTER XVII

LABOUCHERE AND SOCIALISM

WE have seen the depth and intensity of Labouchere's political views. Conservatism in its Tory or Whig form he hated and relentlessly fought. On the other hand, it is not to be doubted that some of the modern developments of the social side of radical policy since his retirement from politics would be far from meeting with his approval. The fact is that he was as strongly anti-socialist as anti-conservative. He believed in competition as a principle of social existence and inequality as a natural fact, although he held firmly that the natural inequality of men should not be reinforced or distorted by the artificial inequality of rank. He did not believe that the task of government could rightly be held to imply moral responsibility towards weaklings; such as were unable to survive by themselves should not be assisted to do so. This was his theory; in his personal relations with others he often failed to practise it. "A fair field and no favour" was his social formula. Government might legitimately intervene to prevent such abuse of opportunity as might result from the business relations of employers and employees; but when all was done that could be done in that way, it was a man's natural qualities that enabled him to swim or doomed him to sink. Any attempt to interfere by legislation with this ultimate differentiation of nature was in his opinion immoral and sentimental folly. A Cabinet had no charge of souls, it was

merely a business concern running the affairs of the nation as cheaply and effectively as possible.

It is evident that a man holding these opinions could not be other than unfavourable to Socialism. The question of Socialism, indeed, as a practical factor in politics hardly presented itself during the most active period of his political life, but in later days it came to the fore, and that, as might have been expected, in his own constituency, so largely composed of workers. In going through Mr. Labouchere's papers I have come across the report of a public debate which he held with Mr. Hyndman, the well-known Socialist leader, in the Town Hall of Northampton. The discussion is interesting as illustrating very clearly Mr. Labouchere's own view of the whole problem of labour and also as showing the definite line of cleavage between the spirit of the older radicalism in popular estimation, at all events, and much that is identified with the radicalism of to-day.

Mr. Labouchere had been heckled in a more or less friendly way by some Socialist listeners at one of his meetings and had in consequence consented to meet Mr. Hyndman in debate. The subject of discussion was: "The socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange to be controlled by a Democratic State in the interest of the entire community, and the complete emancipation of labour from the domination of capitalism and landlordism, with the establishment of social and economic equality between the sexes."

Mr Hyndman opened the discussion with a speech of great eloquence. He began by denouncing the terrible evils of poverty and sickness among the working classes. "There are through the length and breadth of England large proportions of the population sunk into the most terrible misery —misery which I will defy you to find equalled in the most savage tribes on the planet." The growth of wealth and poverty were admitted to be simultaneous and out of the total wealth produced the workers only took a quarter or,

on the most favourable showing, a third. "That means that for every stroke of work the producer does for himself he does three for other people. It had been said that the prevalent misery had been exaggerated by Socialists, but according to the statistics of Mr. Charles Booth, who was no Socialist, 180,000 families were living in London below the level at which a family could subsist. City life debilitated country stock, and the third and fourth generations of those who have come into our great cities become valueless even for capitalists to make tools out of."

All this was misery due to capitalists and the system of wagedom. On the other hand, the economic forms of to-day were rapidly weakening, and the probability was that capitalism would drift much sooner than was expected into universal bankruptcy. "I long to see—I am not afraid to repeat the words—a complete social revolution, which shall transform our present society, by inevitable causes, from senseless and miserable competition, in which men fight and struggle with one another like pigs at a trough (the biggest hog perhaps getting his nose in first, and, it may be, upsetting the whole thing), into glorious and universal co-operation where each shall work for all and all for each.

"Even now, if it were not for competition, there would be plenty, and more than plenty, for all. I say that the economic forms are ready for the transformation I have spoken of. But first, what is our position of to-day? The old Malthusian delusions are gone. Everybody can see that where the power to produce wealth is increasing a hundredfold, at the same time the population is increasing but one per cent. per annum. It is not over-population that causes the difficulty, but the miserable system of distributing the wealth which the population creates. What are the conditions to-day? What are the powers of production at the control of mankind? Never in the history of man were they near what they were to-day. At this present moment, Mr. Chairman, according to the evidence of the

American statist, Mr. Atkinson, on the great factory farms in the west of America, four men, working with improved and competent machinery upon the soil, will provide enough food for 1000; and in every other department of industry it is true in a like, or almost in a like degree. The power of man to produce cloth, linen, boots, for instance, is infinitely greater than ever before in the history of the race. What is more, it has trebled, quadrupled, centupled within the last fifty or a hundred years. What is then your difficulty at the present moment? Not as in old times, a difficulty to produce enough wealth, but the fact that your very machines which are so powerful to make wealth for all, are used against you in order to turn thousands of you out on the streets. It is no longer, as it was in some earlier communities, the power to produce wealth that is lacking. In Northampton as in every industrial town in England, you see great mechanical forces around you, but the workmen instead of controlling the machines are controlled by them. And the products? What is our theory? This. All production to-day is practically social. Everything that is produced is produced for exchange and in order to make profit. Commodities are socially produced by co-operation on the farm, in the great workshop, in the mine. But the moment the product is produced it ceases to belong to those who have produced it and goes into the hands of the employing capitalist, who uses it in order that he may make out of it a personal gain. Consequently, you have here a direct and distinct antagonism between the form of production and the form of exchange. On the one hand, you have got great mechanical forces socially used simply for production for profit, whereas if they were socially used and the product socially exchanged every member of the community would benefit. To-day every increase in the power of machinery may result, frequently does result, in hundreds, or thousands, or tens of thousands of hands being thrown out unemployed on the market. Under the system of society we are inevitably

coming to those very powers which will engender wealth, happiness, and contentment for all."

Mr. Labouchere then rose and replied as follows:

"As your Chairman has already told you, this meeting is the outcome of a remark I made the other day when I was down here. Some of those who entertain strong Socialist views were asking me this or that question on the occasion of my giving an account of my stewardship before the electors of this town. I pointed out that Socialism was only one of the subjects I had got to deal with, but if they would excuse me from going into details then I should be able to come down and discuss with them. I did not anticipate then that we were to have the pleasure of Mr. Hyndman's company in that discussion. I thought it was to be a sort of free-and-easy between the Socialists and myself. But you have sent for your big gun to demolish me. I can only lay before you my own views and those of the Radical Party upon social matters, and make a few observations, showing, as I think, that Mr. Hyndman's system, a very millennial system it is no doubt, is neither practicable, nor, if carried out, would effect the ends which he anticipates. Now, Mr. Hyndman's system, I fully admit, is for the entire regeneration—he has told us so, I think—of the world. It is to be carried out by a scheme which has never yet, since the commencement of the world, been tried. No doubt, as Mr. Hyndman has stated, there are evils, very great evils, and much misery in the world under the present system. But it is not enough to prove that to show that any particular remedy will do away with them. There is, no doubt, a great deal of sickness in this world. That we all admit. But we should be amused if a doctor came forward and said: 'If you try this particular pill you will find that all sickness will be driven away from the entire world. You are a criminal, you are mistaken, if you don't take that pill.' But Mr. Hyndman's plan goes much further than the example of the pill. You must remember that if Mr. Hyndman's plan were not successful it would ruin this

country and everyone in it. Surely, then, it is our business as practical men to look thoroughly and cautiously into this plan before we adopt it. Mr. Hyndman himself will admit that it is, at least, a leap in the dark. Mr. Hyndman has a light in his hand, but this light is not sufficient to tell us what would occur if we were to take this leap. I am not going to say just now whether it would be successful or unsuccessful; all I say is, we ought to look at this matter in a thorough strict and business manner, not dealing with it in vague generalities, but looking into it in all its details, because when it comes to a question of any business, the real consideration in deciding whether the business is a sound one or an unsound one is not of generalities but essentially of details. Now I think that Mr. Hyndman, whether his plan be good or not, somewhat exaggerates the evils of the present system. Mr. Hyndman told us just now that in towns labour was in such a condition that those who engaged in labour faded out in three generations. Well, I confess I was astonished at that. I don't suppose you are all descended from Norman ancestors or anything of that, but I put it to you. Many of you can surely remember that you had great-grandfathers; many of you had great-grandfathers who lived in Northampton. There are many of you whose grandfathers, whose fathers were engaged in labour. You are engaged in labour yourselves. Do you feel yourselves such a puny miserable body of men that you are going absolutely to die out? But I forget. It is not that you are going to die out, you have died out according to Mr. Hyndman. Then what do I see before me? As the American says: 'Is there ghosts here?' Are you human beings? There you stand; you have been engaged in trade; you have been for many generations in Northampton; I do think you have utterly deteriorated—that you are absolutely worth nothing. But statistics prove the contrary of what Mr. Hyndman says. If you take the death-rate in any large town—Manchester, Birmingham, or London, for instance—you will find that, so far from having

gone up, it has gone down. Notwithstanding the misery that no doubt exists, the towns are more healthy now than before. Now, I do not think that Mr. Hyndman seems to understand precisely the present system under which we live. ['How about yourself?'] My friend says 'How about myself?' I am going to explain the present system. In an argument it is always desirable to take some common ground, and we may take this as a common ground: the end of all government is to secure to the greatest numbers such a condition of existence that all may obtain fair wages for a fair day's work, and that all may be employed; and that the government is good or bad in proportion as it approaches to this goal. Now, gentlemen, there are Individualists and there are Collectivists. Modern Radicalism, I would point out to you, recognises this perfectly. It recognises perfectly that while Individualism is a necessary basis for social organisation, yet there is a very great deal that the State can do. Modern Radicalism is in favour of both Collectivism and Individualism. Now I will read to you some words I wrote down some time ago—words that were used by a statesman whom I do not always agree with on foreign politics, but who, in domestic politics, is a very sensible man. Speaking before some association, Lord Rosebery said this:

"'Do not be frightened by words or phrases in carrying out your designs, but accept help from whatever quarter it comes. The world seems to be tottering now between two powers, neither of which I altogether follow. The one is Socialism, the other is Individualism. I follow neither the one school nor the other, but something may be borrowed from the spirit of each to get the best qualities of each—to borrow from Socialism its large, general conception of municipal life, and from Individualism to take its spirit of self-respect and self-reliance in all practical affairs.'

"Upon that subject those are essentially my views; and I would contend they are the views of the Radical Party

as it at present exists. Now I am coming to our present system. I am going to say something for this poor old system. I have often, in different parts of Northampton, attacked the details of the system. I am now going to say there is something good in it. Mr. Hyndman seems to consider that the world is composed of a great many men who are engaged in labour on the one side, and on the other a great many huge capitalists who exploit those men. Mr. Hyndman told you that the man engaged in manual labour only receives a third of the value of his labour, and that the other two-thirds go to those horrible capitalists. Gentlemen, I essentially and absolutely deny that such is the case. But allow me to point first to these capitalists. Now a difference is often made between the amount obtained by labour and the amount obtained by those who do not engage in manual labour. It is exceedingly difficult to arrive at exact figures, and for this reason, that when you take what you call the national income of the country it is often forgotten that the national income is very *much* counted twice or three times over. Take, in the first place, the income tax returns. I want to show you how money is really distributed. There is about £100,000,000 coming to individuals in England from investments in foreign bonds. Very well, and you surely will admit that that is not derived from the labour of Englishmen. Then £49,000,000 is paid to officials. It sounds an enormous quantity, this £49,000,000 paid to officials of the imperial and local government. I have often thought that a great many officials are paid a great deal too high, but we are not entering into that this evening, and there must be some officials; there must be some government, and payment of the officials does not directly come from the sweat and labour of working men. Then there is £143,000,000 derived from public companies. Now these public companies are all in shares. These shares, too, are held by small men, not by great men. A vast number of men hold them. Remember that the whole system of limited liability companies are

really created in order to enable small men to act together and hold their own against the very rich men.

I now come to the real amount which is directly derived from production and distribution, banking and such like; which directly goes into their pockets from the labour of working men. For this amount you must consult what is called Schedule D of the Income Tax. That schedule puts down the professions and trades. Altogether the total is £147,000,000 on which the tax is raised. That is the amount of the income. Now, if you take the professions, law, medicine, art, etc., as producing £67,000,000—I believe that is considered a fair amount—£80,000,000 is left for all the traders, all the shopkeepers, all the bankers, and all the middlemen of the entire country. Well now, you must remember another thing. You must remember that these incomes are not eaten by the men who have them, but really go back to labour. ['No, no.'] Did I hear somebody say 'No'? You do say 'No,' do you? Well, then, tell me what does become of them? Let a man spend his money in luxuries as he likes; these have to be produced; he is a consumer; it may be a foolish one, but his money goes back and forms a part of the entire wage fund of the country. When you say they have not a right to waste and squander their money, I think it would be better if they did not. But just remember how much is spent in the drink trade in this country. Let us look at ourselves a little, or I will trouble you to look at yourselves a little. £132,000,000 is the amount, I think, that is spent every year in drink. Of that £80,000,000, it is estimated, is spent by the working classes. I am not going into the question of drink, whether right or wrong, foolish or proper; I only want to point out that every class, to a very considerable extent, squanders a good deal of its means. Gentlemen, there is no more incontrovertible fact than this—that the more capital there is in the country the better it is for the country and the better it is for labour. I have already pointed out that it itself creates labour by those

persons who have capital consuming the capital. For instance, this £100,000,000 which comes from foreign investments: would it be of any use that its owners should fly from this country with their £100,000,000 per annum? It is better that they should spend it here.

"There are other advantages connected with capital. Mr. Hyndman has pointed to the evils of competitions. Now I am going to show you that competition is really to the advantage of the working man. You will admit that a certain amount of capital is necessary in order to fructify industry. You have to have a factory, plant, and a wage fund. All this requires capital. The cheaper capital is obtained the more there remains for wage fund. On that there can be no sort of difference. ['How is it we never get it?'] Well, you are begging the question. I am going to show you that you do get it. Owing to this country having so much increased in wealth the interest upon capital has gone down. There is perpetual competition going on among capitalists themselves. This is proved by facts. In 1800 the interest on money was about five per cent.; at the present moment interest is rather less than four per cent. All that is taken away from capital most unquestionably goes to labour. It cannot go anywhere else. This is why countries compete for capital. Look at our colonies and foreign nations. Do not they all compete for capital? Of course they do. There is a third reason: the greater number of rich you have in a country, the greater the amount of wool which you may shear for the national expenditure. Take Northampton. Suppose twenty men came here, each with £10,000 per annum. You would say it is an uncommonly lucky thing they have come to Northampton. We 'll levy rates upon their houses, and they will spend money here and benefit the town. Suppose these men came with £100,000 and suppose they put up some hosiery factories. Surely you admit that that would be a great advantage to the town of Northampton. Evidently, the greater the amount of

capital attracted to any one particular place the greater the advantage to that place. The idea of driving away capital is much like a farmer saying: I will drive away my sheep because these sheep eat grass. They do eat grass. But the grass is converted into mutton. In the same way the money of the capitalists is converted into a labour fund for you. Well, gentlemen, I say the only way for a country to be prosperous is to encourage capital to go there, and the only way to encourage capital to go there is to give some sort of security to capital.

"What is the difference between this country and Persia, or any other Eastern country? In the Eastern country a despot is always laying hands on every atom a man can save. A man therefore hides away, or runs away, from the country with his savings. The result is that the country is poor and the working men of that country are poor. Now take the cases of China and this country. In China there are 400,000,000 inhabitants. No doubt the Chinese work very hard. There is, however, no capital there; there is no safety for capital. And the consequence is that the Chinese labourers do not produce so much as the comparatively few million workers in England. Moreover, every fifteen Chinese do not get the wage of one single working man in England. The reason is that the Chinese are not industrially organised. They have not the advantage of capital to aid them in producing. Each works, so to say, on his own hand, with the result that they are far worse off than the men in the factory which has been brought into existence by capital.

"Now, gentlemen, I will take a cotton factory, under the present system. It has to be built and equipped. That requires capital. There is capital required for the wage fund, that is to say, to pay wages to the men during the year, because of course the money does not come in until the end of the year, and then capital is required to buy the raw material. Mr. McCulloch says that for every adult thousand men employed in such a factory £100,000 is required for fixed capital, £60,000 is required for a wage fund, and

£200,000 is required for the purchase of raw material. The total is £360,000. Now, gentlemen, the first charge is obviously interest on capital. You must get the capital in some way. Assume that you borrow it. You get interest on capital. Another charge is the raw material. Raw material you cannot alter because the cotton comes from abroad. All you can do in order to increase the amount going to the wage fund is to reduce the amount that goes as interest on capital, and that which is called profit to the undertaker of the concern. Now what is the profit in the whole of the textile trade? The profit and the interest on capital do not amount to more than four per cent. A portion of that goes to the capitalist and the remainder for the organising skill and intelligence of the man who brings the whole thing together and works it. Well, you surely will not tell me that that is excessive. It is rather too little. For my part I have often wondered why in the world a man takes the risks of trade instead of investing his money in something that brings him in four per cent. Mr. Hyndman talked of the gambling interests of the capitalists. Why, that is all for your benefit. Each capitalist, call him a gambler or a vain man, thinks himself cleverer than other people and says, I am going to make a fortune. One *does* make twenty per cent., and the other gets ruined. But if you take the whole body of capitalists their profits come out at four per cent. If it were not for the gambling chance, or the ability shown by some undertaken in making this four per cent., you would not get money at so low a rate of interest as now, nor would you get a body of skilled organisers ready to take so little as they do take at the present moment for their ability and work. Now, Mr. Hyndman will, I think, admit with me that the thousand men would not produce so much were it not for the organising powers of some man, and also for the capital employed. We know they would not. Each man without the aid of capital would make so much a day. With the organisation and with the capital employed in the

business he makes a great deal more, so that he really benefits—he gets more than he would from his own particular separate work. He gets more that is from his collective work by this application of capital and organisation than he would be logically entitled to were he to work without the aid of capital and machinery.

"Now I am going to show you by a few figures what benefit capital has been to the working man. Here, again, you have a great difficulty with the figures. They are calculated out by various men, but I think this conclusion is generally accepted. In 1800 all that was earned, obtained, secured in wages to working men was seventy millions sterling. In 1860 this had increased to 400 millions. In 1860 the numbers engaged in manual labour were double those engaged in 1800, so you must make a deduction for that. It would then stand thus, that whereas a man got seventy pence, shillings, or pounds for his work in 1800, in 1860 by the co-operation of capital he received 200. But it is even more at the present time, for he now receives 600 millions. There is a dispute as to whether it is 500 millions or 600 millions. Mr. Giffen says it is 600, Mr. Leone Levi says it is 531. Mr. Hyndman says it is 300. Well, anyhow, that is two to one. I stand by Mr. Giffen and Mr. Leone Levi and take the figure as at 531. But here again is another way of putting it. In the first year of the present reign, the gross income of the country was 515 millions. Of this 235 millions went to labour. Labour at the present time gets 531 millions according to the lower estimate of Professor Leone Levi, consequently labour now gets more than the income of the entire country at the commencement of the present reign.

"Gentlemen, there can be no more erroneous idea than to suppose, as Mr. Hyndman apparently (as I gathered from him) laid down, that the lot of the working man is not bettered by machinery, or that machinery by doing part of the work now done by working men either increases the number of hours or reduces the wages of labour. My contention is

that it reduces the number of hours and increases the wage of the individual. Listen to this: Machinery, of course, is revolutionising the labour market; but it is not found that machinery, while it displaces labour, though opening up new channels for the displaced workers, either increases the hours of labour or decreases the remuneration. Before the Sweating Committee it was stated that the wages of nailmakers in this country was 12s. a week on the average. The American nailer earns £6 a week; yet American nails are only half the price of English. The explanation is that, owing to excellent machinery and efficient labour, maintained by high wages and short hours, the American produces 2½ tons of nails while the English man or woman is making two cwt. You say 'Shame!' I say, 'Why don't you do it?' Why don't you follow the example of the Americans?

"Take again the illustration of a Waterbury watch. So exact is the machinery which cuts the different parts of this watch that an assistant will put one of these instruments together in a few minutes by selecting at random a piece from as many heaps as there are parts in the watch. Yet the workmen earn 45s. a week, and the watches can be sold cheaper than those made by workmen earning 8s. or 9s. a week in the Black Forest. How is this? Because by the aid of his improved machinery the American completes 150 watches in the same time as the European is painfully manufacturing forty. You will say that some capitalist wrote that; some man who was unfit to judge the matter. I will tell you who the capitalist was. I got it out of Reynolds's newspaper last Saturday. As I pointed out, in the factory you have these diverse charges—the charge for interest, the charge for ability in organising, and the charge for the wage of the worker. The business, I hold, of the wage worker is to see that he gets a fair wage; and it is because the only way to do this is to combine in trade unions that I am one of the strongest advocates of trade unionism in the whole country. Then take distribution. I leave

out the carriage and sale of the various articles in the shops. Here again competition reduces prices. You know that as well as I do. You know perfectly well that you see stuck up in some shops: 'Come and buy here; things are half a farthing less than anywhere else.' Shopkeepers compete against each other. And there you have just the same reason as in the case of factories why men go into the business of shopkeeping, because each man thinks he is cleverer than his neighbour; each one believes he is going to make his fortune and his neighbour is not. But labour benefits by this because the lower the price of the article the greater the demand for it. I say that, taking the whole shopkeepers of this country, taking their labour, taking the amount of capital they put into their different shops, it is impossible to say that they get an excessive profit from their trade.

"Now, of late there has been a good deal of discussion in regard to co-operation. I observe that Mr. Hyndman did not allude to co-operation. But co-operation exists at present, both in regard to production and in regard to distribution. In order to carry out co-operation on the very largest scale it would not be necessary to alter the whole basis of society. Under the present despised system any workingmen may co-operate with each other, may be their own employers, and in that way get every farthing that is derived from their employment. Statistics show that co-operation, just like other things, sometimes pays and sometimes does not pay. In Lancashire, in Yorkshire and in the north of England there is a great deal of co-operation both in regard to production and in regard to distribution. The latest returns show that about $15,000,000 is employed in this work. As I have said, in some cases they pay and in some cases they do not pay. I have observed some curious things in connection with this. You would say that at a co-operative store you would get an article cheaper than at a shop, whereas, as a matter of fact, you do *not* get an article cheaper. It is a curious thing that you don't, and the reason is this. The

co-operators get together in shares a certain capital which has to pay four or five per cent. Then each member gets a *pro rata* return at the end of the year, a percentage upon the amount he has paid in the store in connection with his own particular trading. That is perfectly fair. Well, so eager are they to get the return that they put up the price of the goods against themselves. You must remember that while I advocate co-operation, or while I say that co-operation needs no Socialism to enable working-men to get every farthing from the process of production and distribution, I do not believe that co-operation in distribution is not without certain evils. Why is it that shops still hold their own, and I believe always will hold their own? By competition in the first place prices in the shops are reduced to as little as or less than the prices in the stores. Again, if a man wants a red herring he don't walk to the middle of the town, near where the stores have to be, but prefers going to a neighbouring shop and buying it there. Moreover, we know that a great many men have spent their wages before the end of the week, and they want a little credit. You may depend, upon taking all things into consideration, that no very great benefit is to be got out of co-operative distribution. I merely went into this question of co-operation, not to discuss so much the advantages or disadvantages of co-operation, as to point out to you that co-operation can exist, may exist, and does exist among working men, whenever they like it, under the present system.

"Now I come to Mr. Hyndman's plan. I have said a few words in favour of the present system. I have tried to explain what that present system is, and how, as a matter of fact, labour does benefit by the existence of capital and capitalist. Mr. Hyndman's plan, I take it, is based upon the notion that labour does not get its full share; that it only gets one-third. ['It ought to get the lot.'] Very well, I have often in the course of my life thought I ought to get the lot, but I have never got it, I can tell you. Mr.

Hyndman's idea is that if the State took upon itself the functions performed by private capitalists everybody would be fully employed and properly paid. Could this desirable result be brought about? That is the real thing. If, at once, under Mr. Hyndman's guidance we could enter upon the millennium we should all be for entering. But the question is whether we *should* enter it by this gate or whether we should get somewhere else.

"I have got here the programme of the Social-Democratic Federation. I have extracted it from *Justice*. It is all right. Mr. Hyndman pointed out that a great many things in the programme were merely doctrines which had been put forward by the Socialists, and had now been adopted by the Radicals. I should say that there was a great deal in it that was put forward by the Radicals and had always been advocated by the Radicals; and we are exceedingly glad that the Socialists agree with us so far. Now I like this programme. What has been my trouble in talking with some Socialists is that they never have the courage of their own opinions. What are you hissing for? I am going to praise you. As members of the Social-Democratic Federation you are surely not going to take under your wing every Socialist in the world. I have often had discussions with Socialists, and I have found that they leave out certain portions of their programme. I have said to them: That is a necessary plank in your programme; knock out any of these stones and you knock down the arch. *You* have done nothing of the kind. *You* have fairly and squarely put this as the Social Revolution in all its details. You see I am not complaining of you, so don't cry out again before you are hurt. Now, Number 7 says: 'The means of production, distribution, and exchange to be declared as collective or common property.' Now, what does this mean? That all manufacturing, all shopkeeping, all shipping, all the agricultural industry, and all banking ought to be done by the State——"

Mr. Hyndman: "Community."

Mr. Labouchere: "Or community. Every man, as I understand it, is to do his bit of work, every man is to have his share of the profit of the business. Have you ever thought what amount of capital this would require? The building of factories would require 1000 million pounds for ten million workers. The wage fund would be 600 millions; the raw material would be 200 millions; the shipping, say about 500 millions. I am trying to underestimate the amount. As to the shops, I suppose, if you took all there are in the whole country, they would cost about 100 millions. Then the agricultural buildings and machinery, excluding the land itself, would be, say, 500 millions. This would be very much under a proper estimate, but still the whole amount runs up to something like 3000 millions. Are all the factories to be seized? My friend says 'Yes.' That will knock off 1000 millions at once. Are all the shops to be seized? ['Yes, yes.'] This will knock off 100 millions for the shops. Still, if you do this, you won't certainly have done. Obviously you have to buy the raw material, you have to have a wage fund, and a good deal to keep the machinery in order even when you have laid hands on it in the expeditious way your friend proposes. That would be 2000 millions. How are you going to get it? You would borrow it. *Would* you borrow it? Let us suppose you borrow it. To borrow it you have to get somebody to lend it to you. I have known a great many persons ready to borrow more than people are ready to lend. Another item, which I am bound to say is not in the Radical programme of the Social-Democratic Federation, is the repudiation of the National Debt. Now, sure, if you repudiate the National Debt you would find a difficulty in getting anybody to lend you the money you want. Where are you going to get it? Are you going to levy it upon property? What property are you going to levy it upon? We 'll allow that the land and factories are to be seized. If they are not to be

seized they are to be ruined; they are to be left high and dry. No individual man is to work in them. You would have a certain amount of portable property like the money that comes in from foreign investments, but its owners would not wait to have it taken. They would immediately clear out of the country."

Mr. Hyndman: "Hear, hear."

Mr. Labouchere: "I am going from surprise to surprise. I really do believe that Mr. Hyndman wishes that the men with the 100 millions should clear out of the country. These 100 millions are derived from investments made abroad. The investments are already made, and the money may be paid here or abroad just as its owners please. Therefore you would absolutely have no control over it. Its owners could walk off to America or France to-morrow, or to one of our colonies, where they would be welcomed with pleasure and where they would be able to live with their 100 millions and spend it just as they liked. The only difference would be that they would not be consumers here, they would not compete with their capital to reduce the interest on the capital necessary to run the whole business of the country. I am very curious to know, I cannot quite make out, whether a man may save or not. It is not clear. I see one of the articles is, 'the production and distribution of wealth is to be regulated by society.' That leads me to suppose he may not save. I should say myself that if you are going to carry out this millennium you could only do it by preventing any sort of saving: because if savings take place you will have some men rich and some poor, evidently. But how about the professions? What are they to be done with? Are professional men not to be allowed to make any savings? I see all justice is to be free. Well, that would create a good deal of litigation; but I personally suffer a good deal from justice, so that I don't know that I should particularly object to that item. You would have, I presume, these professions! You would have doctors and men

engaged in art and so forth? They would be able to sell their productions abroad, their skill abroad. Consequently how would you regulate their fortunes? How are you going to regulate the distribution of wealth in regard to these men? I say the thing is absolutely and utterly impracticable. You could not. Yet, gentlemen, it seems there is some idea of saving, for I see this in another article: 'The extension of the Post Office Savings Bank which will absorb all private institutions that draw profit from money or credit!' Well, but who would put into the Post Office? The Post Office, if they did put it in, would have to incur all the risks of the great business. But I told you that the National Debt was to be repudiated. What is the fact? That the Post Office Savings Bank has invested £5,599,000 of public savings, of labour mainly, in consols. If, consequently, you were to do away with the National Debt one of the things you would do would be to repudiate five millions sterling saved by labour. Now, I think it was some gentleman who was discussing the matter with me in the *Reporter* who said that you might save, but no man would be allowed to employ any savings by making another man work for him. Allow me to point out to you that indirectly one man must work for another if he does not work for himself. Is he going, like that wicked man in the Bible, to hide his talent in a napkin? Not a bit. I suppose he will make a little interest on it. He won't work for the interest himself, so somebody else will. If you are going to try to distribute wealth you will have continual disputes, for I deny that, so long as human nature is what it is, so long as a man wants to lay by something for his children, you will be able to prevent savings. The only thing you would be able to do would be to frighten savings away from this country, and cause them to be taken to some other country, which would compete against you.

"Let us suppose now that this initial difficulty of obtaining the money is got over. Then there comes the organisation. Well, who would organise? Who would be

superintendents, and who would be workers? Who would engage in the complicated business of exchange with foreign countries? Remember, all skilled talent would disappear. You say 'Ha, ha!' Do you really think that a man who perhaps is a skilled organiser of labour, who could earn a thousand or two thousand a year abroad or in the colonies, would stay here and receive an exceedingly small sum, simply because he was an Englishman? Of course he would go away. I say you would deprive the country of its most intelligent organisers.

"There is another difficulty. Who would settle the employment to be secured for each person? Here is a shepherd. He would say: 'I want to be a shoemaker.' 'My good friend,' they would say, 'we don't want you; go and be a shepherd.' They 'd say to me: 'We 've got quite enough newspapers without yours. We want a good chimney sweep. Be that. Go to Newcastle.' They 'd say to our friend, Mr. Hyndman: 'We 'll find employment for you in hay-making in Somersetshire.' Mr. Hyndman may say he likes that paternal arrangement; he likes hay-making. I 'll tell you one thing: I would n't go and sweep chimneys in Newcastle. But you say that the State carries on the Post Office, the Army, and the Navy, among other things; and I say it carries them on exceedingly badly too. You will find, taking ship for ship, that ships can be built in a private yard much cheaper than in a public yard. As for the Post Office, I agree with Mr. Hyndman in saying I do not know any public Department so badly managed as the Post Office. There is an enormous deal of sweating; the big men get too big salaries, and the little men do not get enough. If the Army, Navy, and Post Office be an exemplication of what would be done under the paternal arrangement, Heaven help us!

"But, gentlemen, what really surpasses my understanding is this, how in the world, if Mr. Hyndman's system were adopted, any regular work, or shorter hours, or better pay,

or employment of all would be more easily obtained than under the present system. I say your capital, if you did get it, would be at a higher cost. I say that profit, if you take profit, is almost reduced by competition to a minimum. You would not make one shilling by the transaction. Supply, surely, would depend upon demand. You could not alter that. Take the foreign trade. You would not increase your foreign trade, under this system. You would still have to compete with foreign countries in China and elsewhere. Foreign consumers would take goods from those from whom they could buy them cheapest. The Socialists have perceived this, and they have invented the idea of establishing on the land an enormous number of labourers, who are to act as consumers, and consequently take all the home surplus products. And I see here it is proposed that the Municipal or State army of labourers should be organised as on the great farms in America. Mr. Hyndman alluded to what they did on these bonanza farms. They send men down to them twice a year, once to sow and once to reap. You might find if you had the proposed armies that the product might be increased, but the number of persons employed on the land, that is to say, the consumers on the land, would be reduced. That is why I have been in favour of small holdings.

"As to the numbers of the agricultural labourers, those labourers won us the election last time, remember. What are you hissing at? Did you want the Conservatives to win? You must take people as they are. These agricultural labourers may be wrong, but their strongest desire is to become possessors of small holdings. That has been the aim and object of the Parish Councils Bill, which will slowly and quietly nationalise the land by throwing the property, little by little, and very quickly I think, into the hands of the Parish Councils, who will let it to the villagers. You will then get a large number of agriculturalists on the land, far greater than now, consuming your products. At the same time you would avoid their coming into the towns and com-

peting with you for labour. The subject is a very lengthy one. As I said, you have to go into the question in all its absolute details. I will only tell you one other reason why I object to this system of making us all children in the hands of the State. I say it would be the greatest danger to our liberties. Why is the Anglo-Saxon race the master race in the world? Why has the Anglo-Saxon race maintained its liberties? It is because of that individualism, that self-reliance, which exists in this country. I would trust no body of men, not Mr. Hyndman and the leaders of the Social-Democratic Federation—though I make no implication against them—nor even a body of angels, with the power of destroying and ruining, at one fell blow, the entire nation. This unquestionably would be the case, and who would be able to resist it? You would have some strong and powerful man coming forward, supported by all the discontented, all the men who were not prepared to accept this wondrous dispensation, this dead level of equality. I say you *would* have such a man; I say the risk is too great. Mr. Hyndman has alluded to France. What did one great Frenchman, M. Guizot, say? He said: 'The evil of France is that a Frenchman must either be administered or an administrator.' What is the consequence of that feeling? They have no self-reliance. Every now and then they have a Republic, and then comes one like Napoleon, who overturns their Republic and seizes upon the whole thing.

"I have almost finished now. I infinitely prefer listening to Mr. Hyndman to speaking myself, but I had to make some defence of the cause by which I stand. I do say that the Radical Party as at present constituted, the modern Radical Party, has adopted every reasonable idea of Socialism. And the future of this country depends upon Socialism being recognised within proper limits—Collectivism I would prefer to call it—individualism being recognised, trade unionism being recognised, co-operation being recognised. We must all give up our little separate fads and all work together in

the cause of Democracy, the rule, the absolute rule, of the people, ruling for the benefit of the people."

Mr. Hyndman said in reply:

"There are just one or two points I should like to deal with in reply to Mr. Labouchere. To begin with I have listened with the greatest surprise to-night to his constant reference to the wage fund. Without any disrespect to him I say that, as a matter of fact, that figment has been abandoned by every political economist of any note for the last thirty years. It was abandoned by Mr. John Stuart Mill, in deference to the criticism of Long and Cairnes twenty-five years ago. The bottom was knocked out of it by Marx forty years ago. What is the wage fund, my friends? The wage fund is provided by the labourer himself, who, mark you, advances his labour to the capitalist before he gets a farthing of wages. There is not a man in this hall, however big an Individualist or Radical he may be, not a single working man here who goes to work from week end to week end that does not advance a week's labour to the capitalist before he gets a sixpence in return. The fact of the matter is that the capitalist has got in his possession the value, and more than the value, far more than the value paid as wages before he pays a sixpence of those wages. He can go to his banker with the product he has got out of the labourer and get an advance before he pays those wages. Practically in getting the advance he realises the product of his employees' labour. The fallacy of the wage fund theory is recognised by every economist, and I defy Mr. Labouchere to prove I am wrong. I will defy Mr. Labouchere to name an economist who upholds it."

At this point of Mr. Hyndman's speech Mr. Labouchere rose and said:

"I deny that there is one single economist of repute who questions the effect of what I said about the wage fund. The employer has either to provide himself with a wage fund, and then he is entitled to interest on his money, or he has to

borrow it from someone else, and then he has to pay interest. The working-man, it is perfectly true, gives him credit for a week—not always, but I am taking Mr. Hyndman's statement—but the employer does not, I say—take the cotton industry—the employer does not get back his money till the end of the year. Consequently, whereas the working man gives credit for a week, the employer has to give *him* credit for fifty-one weeks. ['No, no.'] I say yes, there is no question about it. All that I want to point out is that you have to pay interest on this wage fund. Mr. Hyndman admits it, because he says, what does he do? He goes and obtains it from his banker. Does his banker give it to him?"

To which Mr. Hyndman retorted, not ineffectually:

"I say that the security has been provided by the working man before the capitalist is able to raise a sixpence on it, and that all he does is to divide up the surplus value he has got from the worker with the banker who has made the advance. There is no such thing as a wage fund, except that provided by the worker himself. And it is exactly the same with the capital. Friends and fellow-citizens, where does this capital come from? From the labourers themselves. Where can the capital come from if not from the labour of the workers? Did not the workers build every factory in this country, from its base to its topmost storey? Did they not put down every sleeper on the railways, and lay down every mile of line? I say, therefore, that this idea of the wage fund, which has been repudiated by John Stuart Mill, by Cairnes, by Mr. Alfred Marshall, by every economist of note, does not exist in economy, but is a figment of the imagination. Now, friends, as to this question of families fading out. Mr. Labouchere says that the death-rate has lowered. That is perfectly true. On the average the death-rate *has* lowered. But mark this. It has lowered principally in the well-to-do districts. The death-rate in St. George's, Hanover Square, is 11 per 1000; in several districts of Lambeth it is 66."

Mr. Labouchere, evidently astonished, turned to the Chairman and said, "Is that a fact?" Some one in the audience shouted "Proof!"

"Proof you must look up in the statistics; I can't bring a library here with me. I say, friends, in addition to that, that vitality is on a lower plane. For this, again, I give as my authority passages quoted in Alfred Marshall's *Principles of Economics*, where you will find the opinions of doctors. I also refer you to reports of certifying surgeons for the factories for the year 1875 and later dates. I say that when I speak of families fading out, I mean that the physical and mental vigour and initiative of those families are crushed down in our great cities. I have never heard it disputed before; I don't think I shall hear it disputed again. If you ask any of the great contractors as to his supply of powerful navvies, he will tell you he cannot get them out of the towns. If you ask any of the recruiting officers he will tell you the lads from the cities are physically useless. You will find the standard of height for recruits has decreased five inches during the present reign, and the chest measurement in proportion. Consequently there is, I say, in our great cities, which form the bulk of the population, a constant physical deterioration going on, which will end in the fading-out of the people unless we replace this system of robbery and rascality and oppression that is going on at present by a better. I cannot stop any length of time to dispute about the way in which the wealth that is taken from the workers is divided up. It matters not to me whether it is the Royal Family, or the professional men, or the servants who divide it, or in what proportion they divide it, after it has been taken from the worker. That makes, I say, no difference whatsoever. The workers never see it again. Four per cent. also on £100,000,000 is forty per cent. on £10,000,000. How is the amount of capital reckoned? Mr. Labouchere knows perfectly well that a coal mine or factory which has cost but £40,000 will frequently be capitalised at £200,000.

That is the way they put it in the Blue Books. I can give an example of a mill in Rochdale where the freehold belongs to the man who owns that mill, when and where every single charge is met in a separate category, and then, after all these are divided, the interest on the capital is reckoned over again on the whole capitalised value. I say that four per cent. does not represent the profits on cotton, even in these comparatively bad days for the cotton industry. But the mere fact that the profit is going down means that competition is cutting its own throat, that we are no longer masters of the markets of the world. And what does the capitalist do when his profits go down? He tries to make another turn of the screw on his labourers—and the result was the great cotton strike which occurred a short time ago, when, for sixteen weeks on end, the poor unfortunate spinners and weavers stood out because they would not have that amount which the capitalist was losing in the competitive market sweated out of their very bone and blood. So much for your four per cent. or your forty per cent. It is wrung out of the workers, it can come from nobody else. As to the organiser, what did the Roman slave-owner give to his villeins, who stood in the same relation to the working slaves as the capitalist organiser to the labouring classes to-day? He paid him lower remuneration because his labours were less exhausting. That is a positive fact. I say that if you want organisers who to-day are appointed by the capitalist, let them be appointed by the workers, who can pay them far better than the capitalists, because you will have all the capitalists' profits and all the amounts the capitalists sweat out of their employees' labour as well to pay with. ['Don't capitalists start as working men?'] Yes, and the more they grab, the bigger they get. As to the amount received by the working men as wages, Mr. Leone Levi was one of the most unscrupulous and lying champions of the capitalist class who ever wrote. He represented that the average wages of working men and women throughout England

were 32s. a week. That is a positive fact; it is on record in his own books. Thirty-two shillings a week! I say that is a deliberate lie. And that is how he made out his amount of 531 millions. As a matter of fact, Mr. Giffen and Mr. Mulhall both included in the wages of the working classes all those paid to domestic servants, the soldiers and sailors, all that is paid to your noble friends the police. I say that, as a matter of fact, those are not producers in the common sense of the word. They are simply encumbrances upon the industrial community. I say, further, that out of the amount paid in wages to the working classes, which I reckon at £300,000,000 to £350,000,000, not a sixpence more, one-fifth or one-fourth has to be paid as rent for the miserable dwellings the workers occupy. That is, I say, the position of the labouring portion of the community at the present time. I am told that shopkeepers are a useful class. Well, surely there are too many of them. You will find in one street half a dozen people vending the same wares. The organisation of any decent system of distribution would not allow such a state of things to continue, but would turn the unnecessary distributors into producers, and thus lighten the weight of producing on the others. Mr. Labouchere does not seem to understand that what we want is not money. You cannot eat it; you cannot be clothed with it. What you want is good hats, good homes, and good beefsteaks—enjoyment, contentment in life, comfort, and beyond all these, public amusements of every kind. I say that these have nothing whatsoever to do with money. If you want to save, you don't want to save money; you want to save those things which are necessary to the support and continuance of life. Mr. Labouchere seems to think that communism is unknown on this planet. I say that human beings far lower in the range of civilisation than we, with comparatively small and puny means of production, live far more happily, in far better conditions of life, than enormous proportions of our great city population. Where? I will tell you. I say I

have lived among communal tribes where, as a matter of fact, the conditions are as I have told you. The inhabitants of Polynesia, the Pueblas of New Mexico, and the people of other places which I have not seen, live better, considerably better, with all their small means of production, than the proletariat of our great cities, and they produce, regard being had to the productive powers at their command, articles of clothing and domestic use as remarkable in their way as the finest products of civilisation. More than that, all the great bed-rock inventions of humanity, the wheel, the potter's wheel, the smelting of metals, the canoe, the rudder, the sail, every one of these and many more, the stencil plate and weaving, to wit, were invented under communism and no human being knows who invented them. That is a sufficient answer to the supposition that under a Socialist state of society there would be no progress in the invention. But I am asked what the capitalists will do when the transformation to a co-operative commonwealth is made. They will go away with their capital. What is capital? Capital is the means and instruments of production used by a class to make profit out of labour. Can the capitalist roll up the railways and take them away in his portmanteau? Will he walk away with the factories in his waistcoat pocket? Mr. Labouchere himself sees the futility of some of this. He advocates the nationalisation of the railways because he says that they will be better administered under the State than to-day."

Mr. Labouchere: "No, no."

Mr. Hyndman: "Why then do you want to nationalise them?"

Mr. Labouchere: "I very much doubt whether they would be better managed in the sense that they would produce more money than now. I hold that the roads of a country ought to belong essentially to the State. It is better for the general benefit that they should be held collectively. I do object to their giving preferential rates to foreigners and

charging excessive amounts to persons sending goods a short distance in England. That is the reason why I think the railways would be better in the hands of the State."

Mr. Hyndman: "As a matter of fact, preferential rates can be stopped without the nationalisation of the railways. Mr. Labouchere can bring in a Bill when Parliament meets to prevent them. Why, then, is he so Utopian as to demand the nationalisation of the railways? I want, however, to raise the discussion out of the minor points, and I say this, that Socialism does not mean organisation by the State under the control of Mr. Hyndman, or any one else, but the entire organisation of industry, on the highest plane of co-operation for the benefit of all. In that co-operative commonwealth competition for profit will be unknown. Mr. Labouchere has drawn a tremendous picture of what it will cost to effect the change. What does the social system cost you as it is going on to-day? Competition carried to its logical issue must engender monopolies. These monopolies have been given by the capitalist class to themselves in their capitalist House of Commons. That assembly must be re-constituted and turned to Social-Democratic purposes. But then you will lose all those clever men who will not join with you! Where will they go? We are stronger in France than in England, and stronger in Germany than in France. Will they go to China? That seems to me the last refuge of the wandering individualist, the last place on the planet where the individualist will be able to go. Socialism is gaining ground in every country in the world, and mark this, where the people are best educated, there we are most powerful. Germany is the best educated country, and Socialism is stronger there than in any other nation. Whatever city in England has a body of educated workers, there we make way quickly. Mr. Labouchere seems to think that no one will serve his fellowmen unless he is able to grab from them. His idea of humanity seems to me—I wish to say

nothing that is in the least offensive, and I will withdraw it at once if it is considered so."

For about a minute there was disorder so great that Mr. Hyndman was unable to proceed. The Chairman rose and appealed for quietness during the two or three minutes that remained to Mr. Hyndman. Silence having been restored, Mr. Hyndman said:

"I say, friends, that the representation that the men of intelligence, of genius, of capacity, and the like would leave us and go to other places means that they are not animated by the idea of serving their species, but simply of making their own fortunes. I say that mankind, as a whole, has higher ideals than that. I say that all the great work done on this planet, all the great books that have ever been written, all the great inventions that have ever been made, have not been made for money, but for something higher than that. I say further, that when a man has been paid all he requires to sustain a happy, contented, and wholesome life, when he has around him a people living happily with him, co-operating with him, when he sees that every effort he makes tends to the advantage of the whole community and to the drawback and domination of none, I say that then, animated with a lofty public spirit, he will place his whole power, his whole intelligence, his very faults, and his life at the disposal of the community he benefits by his existence."

Mr. Hyndman went on to point out that many of the reforms adopted by the Radicals were in reality due to Socialist inspiration. He instanced the eight hours day and the nationalisation of railways, which Mr. Labouchere had advocated, and concluded what must have been a stirring and able speech as follows:

"Now I repeat, friends and fellow-citizens, that we are arguing for what is inevitable, that at the present moment the capitalist system, like the feudal system before it, and chattel slavery before that, heads back progress. I say

that now, in many directions the force of electricity, and various great mechanical and chemical inventions, which might tend to the benefit of the race are being headed back by low wages and vested private interests. I don't think anybody can deny that. It must be admitted also that universal commercial crises have occurred time after time in this century, each one worse than the one before it. Since the Baring crisis of 1890 there have been great financial difficulties, and thousands and tens of thousands of people have been thrown out of work. Why? Not because there is not plenty of wealth to be produced, but because, as a matter of fact, the power to produce it is taken from the producers altogether. I say that, whether we like it or not, a system of Socialism is being built up out of the facts of to-day. From the misery we see around us there is necessarily arising a glorious future, the golden age which all the greatest of the sons of men from Plato and Moore onward have desired and foreseen, an age in which wage-slavery and competition having ceased, men will co-operate for the greater advantage and enjoyment of all. Friends, that which the great thinkers of old saw through a glass darkly we see face to face. We are the inheritors of the martyrdom of men to the forms of production and distribution throughout the ages. I ask you to-night not to treat this question as being brought down to you from on high, but as growing up under your feet below. Consider it earnestly for the sake of the men, women, and children who are being crushed down in our cities, and whose lives may be rendered worthy and happy. Let us uplift ourselves at once from the question of twopenny and twopenny-halfpenny profit into a higher, nobler, and more glorious sphere."

Mr. J. G. Smith, on behalf of the Socialists, wound up the proceedings by proposing a vote of thanks to both speakers. He expressed his appreciation of the "sincerity and honesty" with which Mr. Labouchere had met Mr. Hyndman.

Opinions will probably differ as to who really got the better of this encounter, nor shall I be rash enough to award the palm. At least Mr. Labouchere's speech shows the sort of way in which he approached the question. It shows his dislike of theory, his determination to stick to the concrete, and his distaste for rhetoric.

CHAPTER XVIII

MR. LABOUCHERE AS A JOURNALIST

By Mr. R. Bennett, Editor of "Truth"

MR. Labouchere went into newspaper work with all the best qualifications that a journalist can have, and with many that no other journalist has ever had a chance of possessing. He had an inborn gift for writing, using his pen by sheer force of natural impulse. He took a lively and unfailing interest in all the doings, sayings, and thoughts of his fellow creatures, while looking at all human affairs with critical but dispassionate detachment. His reflections, if not very profound, were always acute, novel, and humorous; and he had a method of expression, whether in speech or writing, peculiarly his own—pithy, witty, and unconventional. He was a great reader; he was at home in French, German, and Italian; he had acquired a smattering of the classics at Eton and Cambridge; and he had a retentive memory. When he first took up journalism he was nearly forty, and he had had an unrivalled experience of all phases of life, extending from Jerusalem to Mexico. Among other things, he had spent ten years as an attaché in six or eight different capitals; he had gambled in nearly every casino in Europe; he had travelled with a circus in America; he had run a theatre in London; he had sat in the House of Commons; he had dabbled in finance in the city. Add to all this that he had a considerable aptitude for business, as for most other things; lastly that he was never under any

obligation to write a line except to please himself; and it is not surprising that he made a distinguished mark in the world of journalism. It is perhaps not too much to say that the best work of his life was done as a journalist.

Yet he seems to have tumbled into this work quite accidentally, and in the most unusual fashion. He began as a newspaper proprietor; he subsequently became an editor; and he ended as a casual unpaid contributor. This strange inversion of the normal career of a successful journalist is in keeping with everything else in his life and character. The story of his proprietorship of the *Daily News* and of his association with Edmund Yates on the *World* has been told elsewhere in this book. His work on those papers, extending over seven years, had given Mr. Labouchere a useful and varied experience of very different classes of journalism when he decided, in 1876, to start a journal of his own. There had been no quarrel of any kind between him and Yates, and it was not in any spirit of antagonism to the proprietor of the *World* that he decided to make his own paper one of the same type. At that date there was rather a reaction against the solidity and stolidity of the older journalism, and out of it had sprung a class of journals animated by a lighter spirit, and handling both men and things in a free and easy style. *Vanity Fair* and the *World* had been very successful in this line, and their spirit appealed to Mr. Labouchere, who detested pretentiousness in every shape, and to the end of his days never ceased to regard as a ridiculous object the journalist who takes himself seriously. "What is *Truth?*" asked some successor of jesting Pilate, who had heard of the title proposed for the new paper. "Another and a better *World*," replied Labouchere; and the quip no doubt expressed correctly what he had in his mind. The spirit in which he proposed to endow London with a new journal is perhaps even better shown in the title originally projected for this organ, which was, not "Truth," but "The Lyre." It was in deference to the opinion of

Horace Voules that Mr. Labouchere consented to abandon "The Lyre" in favour of "Truth." Voules's business instinct, which was highly developed, warned him that it is better to assume a virtue if you have it not. No doubt he was right. Nobody, so far as I know, has yet had the courage to start a paper called "The Lyre," but Mr. Labouchere would have done it had he been left to himself.

The mention of Voules reminds one that Mr. Labouchere's first step when he had decided upon his new venture was to find a competent practical journalist to undertake the "donkey work." In a lucky moment he fell upon Horace St. George Voules, who eventually became his *alter ego* in *Truth* office. Horace Voules himself was a man of very remarkable personality and abilities. He was the son of a well-known solicitor at Windsor, who, by a strange freak of fortune, was the local Tory election agent, and as such had been instrumental in unseating Mr. Labouchere when he was returned for that borough. While still only a boy Voules had formed an ambition to become a journalist, and, by way of beginning at the beginning, had entered the great printing and publishing house of Cassell, Petter, and Galpin as a printer's apprentice. He made his way upward with extraordinary ability, and the partners formed such a high opinion of him that when, in 1868, they started the *Echo*—the first London halfpenny paper—they put Voules in as business manager. He was then only four-and-twenty. He continued to manage the *Echo* with remarkable success till the summer of 1876, when it was acquired by the late Mr. Passmore Edwards, and Voules resigned. He went away to take a holiday, and a few weeks later received a letter from Mr. Labouchere asking him to come and see him. This was the beginning of an intimate association which lasted till Voules's death in 1909. An agreement was entered into under which Voules was to be "manager" of *Truth* at a very modest salary, though with a percentage of the profits which ultimately proved very valuable; and this agreement was the only one

ever concluded between the proprietor and his second-in-command, although for the last twenty-five years of Voules's life the whole editorial and financial control of the paper was in his hands alone. Another point of interest is that to meet the expenses of the new paper Mr. Labouchere opened a special account with his bankers and paid into it the sum of £1000. Some time later, when the growth of the business necessitated more capital, this sum was increased to £1500; but for the first few years £1000 was the whole of the capital that Mr. Labouchere invested in his venture, and practically it was never touched; that is to say, the account which he opened in 1876 with that credit remained with at least that amount to its credit until he sold the paper in 1910. From those details it may be gathered that neither the proprietor nor his manager regarded themselves as entering upon an enterprise of any great pith or moment, or imagined that they were founding a journal which would become famous over the whole world. It certainly did not occur to Horace Voules, then an ambitious and remarkably successful young man of thirty-two, that in becoming "manager" of this undertaking at £600 a year he was taking a position that would occupy him for the rest of his days.

In such circumstances the first number of *Truth* made its appearance in the first week of 1877. It was a decided success, as success in that class of journals was reckoned at that date, though the sale of the first number was only a fraction of the figures reached fifteen or twenty years later. What was of more consequence, and perhaps more surprising, the second and following numbers were equally successful; for the production of a new journal is rather like the production of a new play—a full and enthusiastic house on the first night does not necessarily mean a long run. Horace Voules was fond of boasting that *Truth* had paid its way from the first, and some of the credit of that result was undoubtedly due to his great business abilities. Mr. Labouchere had not gone into the venture with any idea of making money.

He knew the history of the early difficulties of the *World*, which have been referred to in an earlier chapter of this volume, and it was probably an agreeable surprise to him that he was not called upon to meet a loss on the first few months' working of *Truth*. In an interview which appeared in one of the monthly magazines a few years ago, Voules described the scepticism with which his chief received the balance-sheet presented to him at the end of the first six months. It appeared to Labouchere too good to be true, and he exercised his ingenuity in attempts to demolish it. In later years his attitude towards balance-sheets was very different.

The combination of Labouchere and Voules was a very powerful one. Few newspapers have ever had a more remarkable pair of brains and personalities behind them—the one acute, ready-witted, audacious, irresponsible, intent only upon amusing himself and amusing his readers; the other long-headed, business-like, strenuous, and pushful, intent only upon making money. The time came when *Truth* owed everything to the guidance and inspiration of Horace Voules; but at the start it was Mr. Labouchere who made the paper. This can easily be seen on looking back to the files of the journal during the first two or three years of its existence. There was nothing very striking or sensational in the matter of its contents; in form and substance it did not differ materially from the journals of the same class that had preceded and followed it. But the hand and spirit of Labouchere were all over it, and gave it a character and individuality which were bound to make the fortune of any journal. His literary activity at this period was amazing. As Voules used to say, he was exactly like a child with a new toy; and after playing with many toys he had found the one which exactly suited him, for the handling of a pen was his greatest joy. "He would have written the whole paper if he could," said Voules. In point of fact for a time he did write a considerable part of it every week. He poured out amusing

paragraphic commentaries on every subject of the moment that interested him, and flooded the paper with droll reminiscences of his own adventures and the innumerable distinguished people whom he had met in all parts of the world. He "did" the dramatic criticism, and he never did anything better; in this owing much, no doubt, to his personal experience as a theatrical manager. He wrote every week a "City" article—a very unconventional kind of City article, quite unlike any product of financial journalism before or since. It broke out occasionally in the most unexpected directions; for example, one finds an irresistibly comic account of his experiences among brigands in Mexico cropping up in a survey of the financial position of that country.

Starting on another occasion to discuss the merits of Greek stocks, he lapses into a disquisition upon the character of the modern Greeks, especially the peasantry, illuminated by reminiscences of his travels in their country. One of the funniest things he ever wrote—a detailed account of his journey through the Holy Land with the Rev. J. M. Bellew—made its appearance as an integral part of a critique of some new play. The connecting link between the two things was that Mr. Bellew's son, the late Mr. Kyrle Bellew, had made his début on that first night. It is only when a man writes for his own paper that he can do this sort of thing; what would be the emotions of any normal editor on receiving from his dramatic critic a three-column narrative of a journey in Palestine as part of a notice of Mr. Bernard Shaw's last masterpiece! It was the spontaneity, this unexpectedness, the evident absence of all premeditation or effort, as well as a sort of irresponsible indifference to the ostensible business of the moment, that gave such a piquancy to Mr. Labouchere's writing, as it did to his conversation. It was something quite new in journalism, and it remains to this moment absolutely unique.

Another characteristic of Mr. Labouchere's which gave a peculiar flavour to *Truth* was his frankness and disregard for

the *convenances* in speaking about his contemporaries. He had no taste for mere tittle-tattle and scandal-mongering in print. Prying into the private life of well-known people was rather a weakness of the "society journals" of the day, among which *Truth* was classed, and Mr. Labouchere never favoured it. But it must be admitted that in private conversation he was an inveterate gossip, always well-posted in whatever talk was current to the discredit of anybody sufficiently known to be talked about; and when he found occasion to speak about any person in print, all that he knew about that person was apt to come out, with precisely the same unconventional frankness that distinguished his own personal confessions. Added to this he was not only contemptuous of pretence, sham, and humbug in every shape, hating "snobbism" in its widest sense as heartily as Thackeray himself, but he was hopelessly devoid of the spirit of reverence, even in regard to matters that usually receive reverence on their merits. Nothing was sacred to him. He seemed to discover instinctively the seamy side of what other people admire, and to find a delight in calling attention to it; and this mischievous habit of mind displayed itself in his handling of men as well as things. Introduced into journalism, and fortified with an extensive knowledge of life picked up in the diplomatic service, the theatrical world and the city, and in the ordinary social intercourse of a man of good family related on all sides to distinguished people, Mr. Labouchere's natural bent of mind and freedom of speech led to the embellishment of *Truth* almost every week with candid observations upon contemporary personages, which might be open to criticism on the score of taste, but which made extremely entertaining reading.

Inevitably his pen got him into trouble. The only wonder is that the trouble was not more serious, and for this it may be safely assumed that Mr. Labouchere was much indebted to Mr. Horace Voules. After a very few weeks working together, the two men became very intimate friends,

and Mr. Labouchere, who rarely erred in his reading of men, acquired a great respect for Voules's judgment, so much so that, in characteristic fashion, he speedily turned over to his friend all sorts of business quite unrelated to *Truth*. Voules himself was essentially a fighting man, as he showed when he obtained control of *Truth*, but he had the mind of a lawyer as well as a man of business, and he had—though it may sound paradoxical—a much greater interest in the profit of the paper than the proprietor himself. From the first, although nominally only concerned with the commercial side of *Truth*, he read in proof every line of the paper, and he was not the man to allow the proprietor or anybody else to tumble accidentally into an indefensible libel action. He used to say that he had often saved his chief from that fate, and no one who knew them both would doubt him. Another thing which often saved Mr. Labouchere was his invariable readiness to apologise to anybody whom he had unintentionally annoyed or injured. He did so on many occasions in the early years of *Truth*, and he would always do it if he was approached in the right way. Not only this, but if he was once persuaded that he had been too hard on a man, or that what he had intended as mere play had seriously wounded the subject of his playfulness, he would often try afterwards to make amends. In more than one instance he became quite friendly with people whom he had more or less insulted before he knew them. For better or worse, it was one of the cardinal traits of Mr. Labouchere's character that he was incapable of strong emotion, and, among others, of personal malice. In one or two instances he conceived rather strong antipathies to individuals—not without reason—but it was entirely foreign to his nature to hurt a man for the sake of hurting him; and a most remarkable thing about him was that while he would strenuously attack a man's conduct or ridicule unmercifully his speech or actions, he was quite capable of meeting the same man in a perfectly friendly spirit, and discussing what had been done on one side and

said on the other, not only without heat, but with a sincere sympathy for the victim of his pen. This trait was essential in his character—a result of that philosophic interest in his fellow creatures which caused him to look at all of them alike without any conventional bias in favour of one mode of life or action rather than another. If he had encountered a burglar in his house already loaded with valuables, his first impulse would have been, not to call the police, but to engage the intruder in conversation, and to learn from him something of the habits of burglars, the latest and most scientific methods of burgling, the average profits of the business, and so forth. He would have been delighted to assist his new acquaintance with suggestions for his future guidance in his profession, and to point out to him how he might have avoided the mistake which had on this occasion led to his being caught in the act. In all this he would not by any means have lost sight of his property; on the contrary, the whole force of his intellect would have been surreptitiously occupied with the problem of recovering it with the least amount of inconvenience to his friend and himself. He would have manœuvred to bring off a deal. If by sweet reasonableness he could have persuaded the burglar to give up the "swag," he would have been delighted to hand him a sovereign or two, cheer him with refreshment, shake hands, and wish him better luck next time; and he would have related the whole story in the next week's *Truth* with infinite humour and profound satisfaction.

This is scarcely an effort of imagination. Something very similar happened in *Truth* office in the 'nineties long after Mr. Labouchere had ceased to take any active interest in his paper. A money-lender who had been severely, but not unjustly, handled in *Truth*, insisted upon seeing Mr. Labouchere personally. By that time Horace Voules was the only person who ever saw anybody who had business with the editor, but he happened to be away, and Labouchere consented to see the man. The money-lender arrived in a

most truculent mood; but he was quickly disarmed by Labouchere's ignorance—perfectly genuine—of the nature of his grievance, and beguiled into telling his story with artless confidence. What threatened at first to be a heated wrangle developed into a friendly interchange of views, in which Mr. Labouchere, showing a keen scientific interest in money-lending operations, explained to his visitor exactly where he was at fault in the management of his business, and gave him a few practical hints which might assist him to make larger profits without exposing himself to unfavourable remark. The man seemed extremely pleased with the valuable advice he received, and it was his own fault if he did not depart very much the wiser for the interview. When Mr. Labouchere was writing at large in the early days of *Truth*, he made a great many people extremely angry, and some never forgave him. But to be angry with him if you met him face to face was only possible for the very stupid. Some few years ago the late Mr. John Kensit made an unsuccessful application to the High Court to commit the proprietor of *Truth* for contempt. Considering all that had been said about him in the paper, he had considerable ground for not loving its proprietor, even if he had been aware, which he was not, that Mr. Labouchere had never had a hand in what had been said about him. But they sat next to one another in the well of the court during the hearing of the motion, and by the time the case was on they were chatting and laughing together like old friends. "Good-bye, Mr. Labouchere," said the Protestant champion at the end of the proceedings. "This has been quite a pleasant meeting." "I hope you have enjoyed it as much as I have," answered Labby. "I am sorry that you have got to pay for it." And they shook hands affectionately.

On the other hand, Mr. Labouchere had a certain combativeness of disposition, and he was from the first bent upon using *Truth* for the exposure of abuses and frauds on the public. Consequently, in a certain number of cases he

deliberately laid himself out to attack individuals, regardless of the penalties of the law of libel. His journal had not been in existence many months before an action was commenced by Mr. Robertson, the manager of the Royal Aquarium at Westminster. Mr. Labouchere was a director of the company owning that place, and he wrote very fully and frankly about its affairs in *Truth*—in particular a humorous account in his best manner, of an altercation between Robertson and himself in the fair at Boulogne. The circumstances of the action are of no interest now; but the case is memorable as the first of the long series of libel actions that *Truth* has successfully defended in the course of its existence, and further as the occasion of one of the earliest forensic successes of Charles Russell, afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen, and an intimate friend of Mr. Labouchere's for the rest of his life. Russell had not at that time taken silk, and was little known, but Mr. George Lewis (as he then was) and Mr. Labouchere had sufficient confidences in his abilities to brief him without a leader, and the experiment was fully justified by the result. The next legal proceeding in which Mr. Labouchere involved himself was a *cause célèbre* of the first dimensions—his prosecution by the proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph* on account of a series of persistent and, it must be confessed, somewhat vicious attacks upon the management of that journal. Mr. Labouchere elected to defend himself, and he has rarely acquitted himself in public with more address than he did on that occasion, though he had a good deal of useful assistance from the late Lord Justice Bowen, then a stuff gownsman, who was briefed for the printers of the paper. There is no occasion at this date to revive other circumstances of this personal encounter between two eminent representatives of journalism. The jury disagreed, the case was not brought to trial again, and the hatchet was buried. Mr. Labouchere was released on his own recognisances, and many years later he used to be fond of explaining that he was still in that condition. Apparently he remained in it till his death.

One other libel case of Mr. Labouchere's early journalistic days may be recalled for the sake of the very characteristic accident out of which it arose. Mr. Labouchere had written something extremely dangerous. Voules noted it on the proof, and after a consultation between them Mr. Labouchere agreed to take the passage out. He accordingly drew his pen through two or three of the incriminating lines, or rather he attempted to do so; but his pen always worked in rather an erratic way, and the marks he made on the proof were as much under the words as through them. The consequence was that the printer misunderstood the intention, and the libellous passage which had alarmed Voules not only appeared in the paper, but appeared with the additional emphasis of italics! This was one of the accidents which had to be repaired with an apology, though this did not prevent the issue of a writ. If any other actions for libel were commenced in the early years of Mr. Labouchere's editorship they did not lead to serious fighting, and there was nothing in them worth recalling now. But he certainly contrived in the course of three or four years to give his paper a great reputation for courageous plain speaking, and to convey the impression that its proprietor was a dangerous man to fall foul of, and a difficult man to tackle successfully.

As for his work as an editor during that time, he seems to have taken it very easily after the first few weeks. "I will give him six months," Edmund Yates was reported to have said when his friend was beginning with such a big splash; and the thought was not begotten of a wish, but of Yates's knowledge of his late contributor. The fatal weakness of Mr. Labouchere's character—certainly during the second forty years of his life, and probably during the first forty—was incapacity for sustained effort. He quickly grew tired of everything he took in hand, and he hated drudgery and routine work. Horace Voules used to relate his amazement at the zest with which his chief, at the first start, threw himself into the work of reading copy and proofs, and criticis-

ing and planning improvements in the paper when it was produced; and his equal amazement at the process by which such editorial functions were one by one delegated to the so-called "manager," never again to be resumed. The same story is told by others who were familiar with the inside of *Truth* office during its early days. From the first Voules's position was that of an assistant-editor, and in the course of a year or two he became very much more of an editor than an assistant, while the editor lapsed into the position of an adviser and an indefatigable contributor. It must have been in 1878 or 1879 that Voules went away for a holiday on the Continent, and received a letter in which Mr. Labouchere informed him that there was very little going on, and added, "I do not think I shall bring the paper out next week." Voules believed him to be perfectly capable of this enormity, and the mere thought of it filled him with such dismay that he came back to London by the next train. "You need not have worried yourself so about it," said Mr. Labouchere when his colleague reached the office. "Probably I should have brought the paper out all right." But, unlike his employer, Voules was very given to worrying himself, and this incident worried him so much that he never left the proprietor in charge of his own paper again. At holiday times he used always to take a house within easy reach of London, and it is a fact that for fourteen or fifteen years, until he had his first bad illness, he never missed seeing *Truth* to press himself. This little incident, so very characteristic of Mr. Labouchere, at least serves to justify the observation that he soon learned to take his editorial functions lightly; and it shows the waning of the zest with which he had taken up the "new toy" a year or two previously.

Until the general election of 1880, Mr. Labouchere remained regular in his attendance at the office, and actively interested in the affairs of his journal if his principal work for it was purely literary. But after he was returned for Northampton and began to make a figure in Parliament, which

he did almost from the first, *Truth* began to have a secondary place in his affections. In the course of the next year or two he seems to have gradually relinquished the entire editorial control into Voules's hands. He ceased to supply dramatic criticism, and to write with any regularity on city matters. On the other hand, he naturally began to write regularly on politics, which up to that time he had done only now and then and without expressing any strong opinions. At that date the connection between the Press and Parliament was much less intimate than it has since become. The journalistic M. P., so familiar a figure in recent years, was virtually unknown. There were only two or three newspaper proprietors in the House of Commons; none in the House of Lords. The descriptive reporter had not yet made his appearance in the Press Gallery; the gentlemen there were shorthand writers only. The Lobby correspondent had not risen to that public importance for which he was destined. Mr. Labouchere consequently had the field very much to himself as a parliamentary journalist. Perhaps he did not make as much use of the opportunity as he would have done three or four years earlier, when journalism for its own sake had such a hold upon his affections. He was always extremely averse to using his parliamentary position for the advantage of his own paper; indeed, so far did he carry this feeling that in later years when any matter was under ventilation in *Truth*, which naturally furnished matter for the interrogation of a Minister, it was most difficult to obtain his assistance, and quite impossible to persuade him to ask a question himself. If he consented to give his help, he nearly always got a friend to put the question down. From first to last—to the intense annoyance of Horace Voules—his disposition was always to use his own journal as an aid to his schemes and ambitions in Parliament, never his parliamentary position for the advantage of his journal.

Nevertheless, the reputation that he speedily made for himself in the House of Commons, his novel and individual

style of handling politics and politicians—friends and foes alike—and the audacity of the opinions which he was always delivering with an air "that was childlike and bland," necessarily had their effect upon the paper that he owned and wrote for. As the organ of a rising M. P., constantly before the public, and a mouthpiece of advanced Radicalism, *Truth* gained more than it lost by the cessation of Mr. Labouchere's exuberant literary activity. The circulation of the paper, which had not increased to any great extent between 1877 and 1880, now began to display considerable buoyancy. At the same time Horace Voules was beginning to make his hand felt. He enlisted many useful recruits to fill the space left vacant by Mr. Labouchere. In particular he developed the paper on the financial side, having a strong fancy, as well as great aptitude, for that line of journalism. In fact he may be considered a pioneer in it, for at that time there was not a single financial daily paper in London, and the financial articles in the general daily Press were framed in a very bald and perfunctory style. With the assistance of Mr. L. Brousson, who wrote for *Truth* with most valuable results for nearly twenty years under the pseudonym of "Moses Moss," Voules made the paper as strong in finance as Mr. Labouchere made it in politics, and very much more popular. Voules was a man of great enterprise, courage, and resource, a sound judge of "what the public wants," and at the same time a born fighter. He wrote little himself, but he had a good eye for literary ability in others—at any rate the kind of ability that he needed for his own purpose. Following up the lead which Mr. Labouchere had given in attacking frauds and abuses, he made during the 'eighties several big journalistic *coups* by the exposure of financial swindles. From this he passed on to the fertile field of charity. By this time he had got together a fairly complete and competent staff for dealing with such matters. He made a thorough investigation of every subject he dealt with. He interviewed witnesses himself; he inspired every line that

was written for publication. Thus fortified, he threw down the gauntlet to one swindler after another. Many were routed and driven out of the field by the mere force of the case made against them in *Truth*. Others, who defended themselves by proceedings for libel, were met and overthrown one after another in the Law Courts. The story of all these personal encounters, which lasted almost continuously for ten or twelve years, would fill a volume—and a volume without any parallel in the history of journalism. The work ended only because there was no more to be done. There was no game left worth powder and shot. Horace Voules had simply cleared out this particular field. Nor was his activity confined to any one field. The public services—particularly the Army—the Church, the administration of justice, especially by justices of the peace, and indeed almost every sphere of human activity where there was any wrong or misconduct that required castigation, brought perennial supplies of grist to the journalistic mill over which Horace Voules ruled in Carteret Street.

Thus it came about that towards the end of the last century *Truth* had become a journal with a unique record, an influence that was felt—mostly for good—all over the English-speaking world, and incidentally a very valuable property. Before the end of the 'eighties it must have begun to yield Mr. Labouchere—a rich man independently of it—a larger income than would have sufficed for all his requirements, which were never extravagant. The attitude of the parent towards his bantling, which had grown in such an unexpected fashion, was very much like his attitude towards everything else that happened to him in life. If he took any pride in his offspring, he did not manifest it openly; in a general way he betrayed no concern in its performances. When he visited the office, which he usually did for an hour or two on Monday and Tuesday mornings on his way to the House of Commons, it was only to correct the proofs of his own contributions—by this time almost entirely confined

to politics, except when he went abroad in the autumn—to consume a frugal lunch, and to chat about anything but the business of his paper with anybody whom he could find to talk to.

A personal reminiscence of this period will show how strangely uninterested he was in the affairs of the paper which he was supposed by the public to direct. In the spring of 1893, Horace Voules had a bad illness, the first of many, and as he kept the whole business of the office in his hands the situation was rather serious. I went down to see him at Brighton, where he lived for the last twenty years of his life, and heard from his doctor that if he ever came back at all it could not be for many weeks. On returning to town I went straight to the House of Commons and reported this alarming intelligence to Mr. Labouchere. If I had reported it to the Speaker he could not have manifested less concern. What chiefly interested Mr. Labouchere was the nature and treatment of Voules's ailment; he was always prepared to give advice, publicly or privately, on the preservation of health. "You know Voules eats a great deal too much," he said, which was no doubt true. "His doctor should do so and so. I will write to him at once." I suggested to him that it might be more useful if he would write something for *Truth*, as we had not an editorial article in sight for next week. "You can do very well for once without an article, can't you?" was the staggering reply. I endeavoured to convey to him that there was a great deal of work at the office which somebody would have to do in Voules's absence, among other things about fifty letters a day requiring to be attended to. "I should not bother myself about answering letters if I were you," said my employer. This did not surprise me so much, for I had previously heard from Voules of our proprietor's golden rule for dealing with correspondence: "I never knew a letter yet, Voules, which would not answer itself if you left it alone for two months." It did not take many minutes' conversation to show that the editor was

quite the last person from whom any assistance was likely to be obtained in carrying on the paper in the emergency that had arisen; at the same time I remember that we had a very interesting talk about the Home Rule Bill before I left him. I wondered afterwards what he would have said if I had written to him in his own words to Voules, "I don't think I shall bring the paper out next week." Probably it would not have disturbed him seriously. It should be added that he did write to Voules as he had promised—a very kind, sympathetic letter, in which he begged Voules above all things not to hurry back, and assured him that everything would go on all right in his absence. I forget whether he said that he would see to that, but it is quite possible that he did. It is a fact that the following week—the first in which Voules had been absent for about fifteen years—Mr. Labouchere also omitted his customary visit to the office on a Monday morning. I suppose he thought that as Voules was away I should not have much time to talk to him.

To those who were behind the scenes there was something ludicrous and something supremely "Labouchere an" in the contrast between this airy indifference to the fortunes of his journal, and the public conception of the proprietor as an indefatigable editor personally inspiring and directing all its performances. Possibly it amused Mr. Labouchere himself, but far more probably he never gave it a thought, for nothing in his life that appeared to other people abnormal ever presented itself in that light to him. To any one who knows the *laissez-aller* spirit in which he treated every affair of life, it cannot cause the slightest surprise that he allowed himself to drift into a position which was, on the face of it, somewhat equivocal. The best evidence of the view that he himself took of this anomalous position is afforded by the way it came to an end. Horace Voules chafed for a long time under his own relation to the titular editor, and it is really more difficult to understand his long acceptance of this position than Mr. Labouchere's failure to do anything towards

altering it. The explanation in his case, no doubt, is that with the growth of the profits of the business he gradually came into a very handsome income, and he was a man who valued this a good deal more than personal glory. But he certainly felt aggrieved, as most men would, that so much of the credit of his work should go to another, and what perhaps annoyed him more was Mr. Labouchere's characteristic indifference to everything that was done in his name. Out of this there grew up a coolness between them, and at last Voules openly kicked. The moment the question of the editorship was raised in this way, Mr. Labouchere instantly conceded it, as Voules might have known he would. "My dear Voules," he said, in mild surprise. "*I* don't want to be the editor. You can call yourself the editor if you like." In his own mind he probably said, "If you attach any value to such an absurd trifle, why, in the name of wonder, did you not say so before?" In this characteristic fashion, Mr. Labouchere divested himself of the last rags of editorship. Voules recounted the conversation to me immediately after it took place. I cannot fix the date precisely, but it was probably in 1897 or 1898.

There remains little to be related of Mr Labouchere's career as a journalist. But it may assist the comprehension of what appears difficult to understand, in his relation to the real editorship of his paper during so many years, to refer to what passed between him and Voules on a lamentable occasion in 1902. At that time certain unfortunate circumstances had come to light which made it impossible that Mr. Brousson should remain on the staff of *Truth*, or that Horace Voules should continue in the formal position of editor; I trust I may be forgiven for referring in mere detail to the indiscretion of an old and dear friend and the sad end of a brilliant career. Mr. Labouchere, to whom the situation must have been as painful as to anybody, took counsel with Sir George Lewis, as a friend of both parties, and between them they excogitated an announcement for publication to

the effect that Mr. Voules had resigned the editorship of *Truth*, but would remain associated with the paper. It was the least that could have been announced under the circumstances, but naturally poor Voules fought hard against it, and a warm debate took place at Sir George Lewis's office. Voules wanted to know who was to be appointed editor, and in what capacity he himself was to be "associated with the paper." He declined to submit to the humiliation of having to serve under one of his own subordinates. Mr. Labouchere told him that he did not see the necessity of appointing another editor. "You can't seriously propose that the paper is to be carried on without an editor," said Voules. "My dear Voules," replied the proprietor, "I have now been connected with newspapers over forty years, and I have never yet discovered what an editor is. If you like, I will resume the editorship, but it seems to me quite unnecessary." So little did Voules understand his old friend even at that date that he came to me at the end of the interview in a terrible state of agitation, convinced that Labouchere was playing with him, and that he and I were to change places. Labouchere was, of course, perfectly serious, and for the next seven years *Truth* remained without an editor. I suppose that in all his life Mr. Labouchere never did a more extraordinary thing than this, judging by what would be considered ordinary conduct for a man in his position in such a case. Yet surely the extraordinary course which he took is an example of the way in which his habit of looking at the essential things in life, and snapping his fingers at conventions and traditions, guided him to the best possible solution of a serious difficulty. He regarded it as essential that Voules should not be formally and officially the man in control of the paper. He regarded it as equally essential —but how few would have done so!—that the man who had served him so well and honourably for five-and-twenty years should not be cast out to end his days in disgrace. So he said: "I will have no editor in future. I see no necessity

for it. Manage as best you can without one!" Is not this really a stroke of genius, seeing that it is a solution of the difficulty that no one else would ever have dreamed of, that it is so perfectly simple, and that it effected everything that was really necessary? It also becomes easier, I think, after this to understand how Mr. Labouchere had previously allowed his paper to go on for about seventeen years under the editorship of its business "manager" without suspecting that there was anything anomalous in this arrangement until his manager surprised him by protesting against it.

I feel that I cannot close this narrative of Mr. Labouchere's relations with *Truth* without a reference to the termination of his sole proprietorship of that journal, for it was very characteristic of him. Slight as was the interest that he evinced in his property in his later years, he never seemed desirous of parting with it, naming a prohibitive price when any one offered to buy it, as many did, including Horace Voules. When, after poor Voules's death in 1909, I myself pressed him to turn his proprietorship into a company, he politely but firmly declined, observing that he distrusted boards, and had always believed in finding a man who can manage your business for you and leaving him to do it. Undoubtedly that was the principle on which he had conducted many of his affairs. But in the end I ventured to suggest to him that it would be a great kindness to me and other members of his staff, who had been connected with the paper for many years, if he could see his way to put the proprietorship on a permanent footing, and save us from the possible results of a sale of the paper to the first bidder in the event of his predeceasing us. His response was instantaneous and most sympathetic. He practically offered me an option on the paper at half the price he had asked Voules a few years previously, and interested himself warmly in explaining to me how I was to turn this opportunity to the best advantage. When the proposed deal did not promise to come off very speedily, he finally said that he would waive

his objections to converting himself into a mere shareholder, and leave us to form a company, taking from him or placing with others such shares as we could. So ended Mr. Labouchere's proprietorship of *Truth*—in an act of pure kindness of heart. It is an exact parallel to his easy-going abdication of the editorship at the first hint from Voules that the existing position was rather hard on him.

Mr. Labouchere was a man of most extraordinary character. "He *was* an extraordinary person!" is the exclamation that one has heard a hundred times rising involuntarily to the lips of those who knew him well. The story of his connection with journalism is an extraordinary one, but as loosely sketched in the foregoing reminiscences it can give but an inadequate impression of what was most remarkable about him. This would be equally true of any mere narrative of the events of his career, or any collection of his disjointed utterances. In writing of him one is always in danger of conveying the impression that he was a mere eccentric or freak. In reality he was something very much more. Among other things he was one of the most prolific and spontaneous writers that ever lived, and everything that he wrote, however trivial the subject, bore some mark of his own unique personality. His love of his pen was perhaps his most vital characteristic; it resembled, indeed, his love of his cigarette, and the two affections always came into play simultaneously. He would take up a pen anywhere, and commit his thoughts to paper without regard to external circumstances—during a debate in the House of Commons, during a children's party in Old Palace Yard, in a public room of an hotel. When abroad on his holidays he used to write contributions to *Truth* as regularly as if he were under contract to supply so much copy each week—evidently writing purely as a pleasure. Probably Mr. Labouchere is the only man who ever wrote for publication, systematically and voluminously, without ever being paid for what he wrote. Indirectly, of course, as the proprietor of *Truth*,

he profited by his contributions to his own paper; but nobody who knew him will suppose that this consideration ever presented itself to him as a motive for exertion. Neither was he actuated by that common weakness, love of seeing himself in print. On the contrary, what became of anything he wrote after he had produced it was a matter of profound indifference to him. "I am the only person, I believe, on the Press," he wrote in his later days, in answer to an apology for consigning to oblivion a rather long-winded article forwarded from Florence, "who does not care in the least whether his lucubrations do or do not appear in print." He wrote to me many times in the same strain, and it was no doubt literally true. Frequently he would write an article and omit to post it; sometimes he mislaid it permanently, sometimes he accidentally destroyed it. Sometimes he would send a second edition of an article already received and printed, explaining that he could not remember whether he had posted the first edition or torn it up by mistake. From long experience of him, I doubt whether he ever looked at anything he had written after it was printed and published, unless some accidental circumstance gave him occasion to refer to it.

No man who ever wrote more strikingly exemplified the aphorism "le style c'est l'homme." His style was entirely his own—a pure, spontaneous growth, neither derived from reading, nor formed by conscious effort. It reflected as vividly as his conversation the characteristics of his intellect, his lucidity of thought and expression, his quick apprehension, his distaste for display, his unconventional habit of mind, his dry humour, his naïve wit. A very good judge, and an old acquaintance in Parliament, writing of him in the *Saturday Review* after his death, said that "Mr. Labouchere's prose was Voltairian." It was Voltairian because his mind was Voltairian, and because he reproduced on paper, instinctively and without effort, exactly what was in his mind. But it is out of place to speak of anything that Mr. Labouchere did

in terms of uncritical eulogy. On the technical side Mr. Labouchere's literary work was marred by the failings which beset him in everything he undertook—his repugnance to "taking trouble," and his supreme indifference. Although he would overhaul his proof mercilessly, and go on doing it as often as a proof was submitted to him, the process was generally that of expanding and rewriting, rarely of touching up and improving what he had written. He thought as little about "polishing up" a sentence for the sake of literary effect as of brushing his hat before he went for a walk. The consequence was that the inevitable blemishes in the work of a man who wrote so fluently, but never had the patience to read and correct his own manuscript, constantly made their appearance in print. No one who reads his work, knowing the way it was done, can doubt that he had it in him to enrich English literature with veritable masterpieces. It was the will that he lacked, not the ability, and so it was with nearly everything he undertook.

Mr. Labouchere was a man of genius—genius real, original, and many-sided. The signs of it are evident in almost everything he did, including his mistakes and his eccentricities. But he had the misfortune to be born very rich, and if he was not by nature indolent he acquired an indolent habit of mind through never being under the necessity of exerting his powers to their full capacity. His genius was of the critical, not the creative order, and this also contributed to his forming a view of life inconsistent with strenuous exertion, for it led him to despise nearly everything that men ordinarily prize, success in all its shapes included. During all the time I knew him, his attitude towards life was that of a man playing a game, interested in it certainly, but only for the amusement it afforded him. It is worthy of note that he confesses to having been in youth an inveterate gambler, and having given up play because he found that it was acquiring too much hold over him. To be interested in everything, but too much interested in nothing, was a cardi-

nal principle of his life. Few men have ever incurred more obloquy, and many worthy people regarded him with aversion; but it was only from misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. To this he himself contributed by his perverse habit of self-depreciation, his indifference to the opinions of his fellow-men, and the amusement he found in mystifying them. It is absurd to put him on a pedestal—a position which he never allowed any one else, and which he took good care to show he never desired for himself. But it was impossible to be much in contact with him without appreciating that he was a being of a rare order of intellect, with something in him that placed him above the ordinary failings and foibles of humanity, however much he might try to magnify his own. It was my privilege to know him pretty closely for over thirty years, and very intimately for the last ten. Though he did in that time many things that one would have wished he had not done, and said many that would have been better left unsaid, I can look back to him now only with admiration for his wisdom and his wit, and affection for his drolleries and his indiscretions, no less than for his many virtues.

There comes back to me the last time I sat with him, by the side of the lake at Cadennabia. "Let us get away from this beastly band," he had said, in the hall of the hotel after dinner, "one can't hear oneself speak." So we sat down outside, and he rambled on: "I can't think why people want bands when they come here. Wonderful place this for stars! What I like about it is that you can see them in the lake without craning your neck. I sit here and follow Bacon's advice: look at the stars in the pond instead of in the sky, and you won't tumble into the pond. There was a Greek named Pythagoras—or some ass at any rate—who comforted himself with the notion that in the future state he would be able to hear the music of the spheres. Who wants to hear the music of the spheres? Bother that band! What strikes me most about the stars is that they do their

work so quietly. Pythagoras picked up his notions in the East—probably from the Jews. They imagined angels with harps and a perpetual concert in heaven. Good God! Think of having to sit at a concert for all eternity! Wouldn't you pray to be allowed to go to hell? The only reason that I can see for desiring immortality would be the chance of meeting Pythagoras and the other asses, and having a few words with them. Now Socrates was not an ass. He was for banishing musicians from his republic. No doubt he saw that this would get him a lot of republican votes. Gladstone once said to me——"

And then he dropped off to sleep. He was beginning by that time to doze at odd times, though all his life it was characteristic of him not to be able to take his sleep like an ordinary mortal. And not long after I left him sitting there by the lake, sleep finally overcame him, and he passed out into the night, to learn more of the silence of the stars, and to have it out, if possible, with Pythagoras.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CLOSING YEARS

UPON only one occasion in his life could a charge of Jingoism have been brought against Mr. Labouchere. The last long speech he made in the House of Commons was against the second reading of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill, in which he said that he objected to women being given the vote because they could not be soldiers; in short, because their physical limitations prevented them from being able to take a place in the battlefield. A member pointed out that the speaker himself was not a military man. With passion he replied that, whereas there was not a man alive who could not fight, and, if necessary, swim through seas of gore to protect his native land, the other sex were incapable of putting up with the hardships and privation involved in warfare.[1]

It was in the third session of Mr. Balfour's Parliament that Mr. Labouchere made his last speech in the House of Commons. He was nearly seventy-four years old, and had been hankering for some time after the delights of a reposeful old age in the retirement of the beautiful villa he had bought in the neighbourhood of Florence four years before. Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman had written to him in the previous December, when a rumour of his intended retirement had reached him: "I hope you are not really thinking of breaking off with Parliament, though I frankly say it is what

[1] May 12, 1905.

I should do if I could, who have the advantage of a year or two over you, but I think we old stagers with sound views are wanted to steady the new-century gentlemen by a little of our early Victorian wisdom." But Mr. Labouchere was wise enough to know how dull it would be to exist in a modern Parliament as almost the only survivor of the grand old Victorian Radical party, whose sympathies and ideals, the policy of the Labour members alone resembled, in the remotest degree. His mind was made up, but he kept his own counsel, except to his leader, because, as he wrote to Mr. Robert Bennett at the time of his retirement, a man who is known not to be going to stand again becomes a nonentity in Parliament.

In a letter to Mr. Edward Thornton, the month before his withdrawal from public life, he gave his view of the Parliamentary situation at that time:

> Just now politics are dead. When Parliament meets, the Liberals will try to put the Government in a majority during the session, and Balfour will try to carry on to the end of it. There seems no reason why he should be beaten, provided that he can keep his men in the House. But this is also our difficulty. The individual M. P. never wants an election. . . . Campbell Bannerman is now alsolutely certain to be the next Premier unless his health breaks down. All that you see about this or that man in the Cabinet is only intelligent anticipation. He is not *de jure* on the succession to the Premiership, there are no consultations, and he has a wholesome distrust of his Front Bench friends who almost all have intrigued against him. I know him intimately, and he talks to me pretty freely, for I have expressed to him that I want nothing. At seventy-four a man is a fool to be a Minister.

The news of Mr. Labouchere's retirement came as a surprise to most of the world. The first intimation to the public was his letter to the Liberal electors of Northampton announcing his decision. It was written from Florence, and dated December 14, 1905. It ran as follows:

GENTLEMEN,—I have been elected by a majority of you to represent you in six Parliaments. I have received no intimation from any of the Radicals, to whose votes I have owed my having been your member for twenty-five years, that they disapprove of my Parliamentary action whilst serving them, or that they do not wish me to be one of their candidates at the next general election. Were I, therefore, to come forward again as a candidate there is little doubt that I should be one of your representatives in a seventh Parliament. But I am now seventy-four years old. At that age a man is neither so strong nor active as he once was, and any one who wishes to represent efficiently a large and important constituency like yours in Parliament should be strong in wind and limb. I feel therefore that I ought not to take advantage of your consideration towards me in a matter so vital to you in order to lag superfluous on the political stage.

I have delayed until now making this announcement because it was impossible to know when a general election would take place, and I thought that it would be more convenient to you for me to wait until the date of the election was settled and near at hand. I do not think that my withdrawal will affect the position of parties in Northampton. In Dr. Shipman you have a member whose Parliamentary action has been in accord with the pledges that have already secured his return, and on whose personal worth all are agreed. You will have no difficulty in finding a man to replace me, as eager to promote the cause of democracy as I am, and who will be better able to fight for the cause than one in the sere and yellow leaf.

Mr. Labouchere remarked once, that he had on one occasion only been asked by a constitutent for a pledge with regard to his Parliamentary action. He had unhesitatingly given it, and been unflinchingly true to his word. The elector's injunction had been, "Now, mind, I say, and keep your hi on Joe." But whether the story is a slight exaggeration of the confidence his constituents had in him to faithfully represent their views at Westminster or not, it gives elliptically a description of his attitude during the twenty-five years he served the electors of Northampton. He became

their member as an anti-Imperialist, in Lord Beaconsfield's interpretation of the term, and he took his leave of them as an anti-Imperialist, in the more modern, and what may be called "Chamberlain" sense of the word.

I shall quote Mr. T. P. O'Connor's farewell on the occasion of his retirement, which he published under the title of "The Passing of Labby," for, apart from its literary merit, it is the fine appreciation of a friend of many years' standing, who knew the value of Mr. Labouchere from the social as well as the Parliamentary and journalistic points of view:

There is no old member of the House of Commons who will not feel a pang of personal regret at hearing that Labby is leaving that Assembly. No one has a right to criticise a man for giving up an active life at seventy-four years of age—he has done his work. But Labby had become an almost essential part of the House of Commons; and there never will be anybody who can quite take his place there. That extraordinary combination of strong party zeal, with a lurking desire to make mischief; the sardonic and satirical spirit, mingled with a certain fierce, though carefully concealed zeal for the public good; the mordant wit that was equally the delight of the House and of the smoking room; the world-wide and varied experience of all life in almost every country and in almost every form—these are the possessions of but one man, and his like we shall never see again. There are two Labbys. There is the Labby who almost corrodes with his bitter wit, and who seems to laugh at everything in life. There is the other Labby who has strong, stern purpose, who hates all shams, all cruelty, all imposture, all folly, and who has made war on all these things for more than a quarter of a century. There is even a third Labby—the man who hates to give pain even to a domestic, and who is laughingly said to have run out of a room rather than face the irritated looks of a maidservant whom he had summoned by too vigorous a pull at the bell. One of the reasons of the popularity Labby enjoyed in the House was his tolerant amiability. I have seen him in the smoking room in the most friendly converse with many a man whom in previous years he had most fiercely attacked; he bore no ill will, and treated all

those encounters as demanded by business, and as dismissable when the fight was over. Finally Labby was a far straighter, far more serious, far more effective politician than his own persiflage would allow people to think. With all his light wit, there was something stern and rigid in the man, as you could see from the powerful mouth, with the full compressed lips. He was perfectly honest in his hatred of extravagance, pretence, vainglory. He preferred riding in a tramcar to riding in a coach and four. He dressed so shabbily sometimes that his counsel used to have to remonstrate with him when he had to answer a charge of libel. He was an ascetic in eating. Once he dined quite comfortably, when he was electioneering, on ham sandwiches with sponge-cake for bread. He rarely, if ever, tasted wine; he smoked incessantly the poorest and cheapest cigarettes. As he was in private, so he was in public life. He derided all great Imperial designs as snobbery and extravagance; he hated ambition—in short, he was in both his personal habits and his public opinions, a true devotee of the simple life. He did immense service to his party in his time. During the heat of the Home Rule controversy he spoke in scores of towns; took journeys by night and by day, never spared himself exertion, never complained of discomfort; in his laughing air, with his assumed air of languor, he was a strenuous, manly, courageous fighter. And he never changed, he never concealed, he never explained away his opinion upon anything. And so I bid him with regret farewell from a scene where he was a model of honest good faith and courage.[1]

So Labby goes! [mourned the *Morning Post*]. What Parliament and public life will be without him, I hate to think. The letter of cheery regrets to his Northampton constituents subtracts the *sauce piquante* from the Parliamentary dish. The House has long counted Labby as the last of its originals, has prized him as a refreshing relish, has looked to him for the unexpected flavour. All strangers would ask inevitably to have him pointed out, and the House would fill at once when the word went round the corridors and lobbies and smoking rooms that Labby was "up" and holding forth from his customary corner

[1] *M.A.P.*, Dec. 30, 1905.

seat below the gangway—the best of all positions from which to address the House. So too the smoking room became suddenly crowded when Labby was to be seen standing there with back to fireplace, the eternal cigarette between his lips, ready for talk. It gives a peculiar pang to realise that he will be seen there no more. But the pang is lessened when one finds Labby—Labby of all men—seriously pleading old age as a ground for his retirement. It sounds like one of his little jokes, or, perhaps, it is a genuine case of hallucination. Labby had possibly a touch of old age at twenty, but he had also the sense to outgrow it. Since then he has never relapsed, and now in the seventy-fifth year of his youth, and with a pen several years younger, it is a vain and commonplace and un-Labbyish thing to pretend that youth and he are no longer "housemates still." An unbelieving world will not accept that plea. . . . I daresay that, half a century ago, Labby was, not unlike the wise youth Adrian in Meredith's *Richard Feverel*, quite unnaturally cool and quizzical, long-headed and non-moral, but an Adrian humanised by something of the Bohemian spirit and a turn for careless pleasuring. And in those days, no doubt—his Eton and Cambridge days—he struck his contemporaries as really old. But no one, for fifty years, has ever accused him of not having overcome his early weakness; and it was the very last charge I ever expected to hear Labby prefer against himself.[1]

There was something about Mr. Labouchere's personality, apart from his deeds and thoughts, which appealed almost irresistibly to the affectionate sympathies of all mankind. To find an ill-natured comment in any of the articles that were published about him in the press when he left the House of Commons is so difficult that, were such a one to be recorded in this volume, it would give its author an almost unenviable position of distinction. But in order to be perfectly impartial, I shall merely quote the pleasant part of the only one I could find, so that its writer need not feel that he has been placed in an out-of-the-way corner with a fool's cap on his head:

[1] *Morning Post*, Dec. 23, 1905.

On the whole Mr. Labouchere has done a great deal of good in his life, more good and less evil than many so-called statesmen. He has exposed swindlers and moneylenders and rotten companies. He has obtained for the public the right to ride, drive, and walk up and down Constitution Hill. No victim of cruelty or injustice ever appealed to him for a hearing in vain. Above all he wrote an English style of remarkable purity, logic, and humour.

Letters of regretful farewell poured in upon Labby in his Florentine home, and he possessed a kindly characteristic common to nearly all frankly unpretentious human beings. He loved his post. In his cosy armchair by the fire he read his letters and enjoyed them, and what was more—he proceeded to answer them. No pre-occupation, however diverting, ever prevented him from, at the first available moment sitting down to his writing-table, and, in the almost illegible hand which he vainly tried to improve, penning answers to his welcome correspondents.

"I have been very sorry, but not surprised," wrote Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman to him on Christmas Day, "to read in the newspapers of your retirement. It is not over kind of you to put it on the ground of age, for that hits some of the rest of us hard. For my part, I confess my sentiment when I read it was: *O si sic omnes*—and envy was the prevailing feeling. But, seriously, we shall miss you greatly as one always ready to hoist the flag of the old Liberalism, as distinguishable from the less stout and stalwart doctrine which passes for Liberalism with the moderns.

"But now as you are going would you care to have the House of Commons honour of Privy Councillor? If so it would be to me a genuine pleasure to be the channel of conveying it. You ought to have had it long ago. I may add that in the highest quarter gratification would be felt. I have taken soundings. I think we have done and are doing pretty well. The Government are pretty well the pick of the basket, though there are some good men left out, and I

think we can make it a change of policy and not a mere change of men. All seasonable wishes to you and yours.—Yours always,

"H. C. B."

"Knowing you to be a wise man," wrote Lord Selby, who had been Speaker of the House in three of the six Parliaments of which Mr. Labouchere had been a member, "I was not surprised to see that you had made up your mind to eschew Westminster, and enjoy Florence and its climate, but if I were still in the Chair I should miss you in the next Parliament, and I am sure the smoking-room will be a forlorn place without you; and I do not see how the loss is to be repaired, for it takes a good many years to grow a plant of the same kind. I wish you and Mrs. Labouchere long leisure and much pleasure in your Italian home, seasoned with occasional visits to England. The election may be said to have begun with Balfour's speech at Leeds, and Campbell Bannerman's at the Albert Hall. . . ."

The leader of the Irish party wrote from Dublin:

"Dear Labouchere,—When writing the other day, I did not know that you had any idea of retiring from Parliament. I learned your intention with deep regret. You have been so long one of the truest friends of Ireland that you will be missed by us all, and at a time when we can badly spare a real friend. With heartiest good wishes, and many thanks for your advice and assistance on so many occasions, I remain very truly yours,

"J. E. Redmond."

"I have just read your farewell to Northampton," wrote Sir Wilfrid Lawson, on December 17, "and it has troubled me. I am going to stand again for Cockermouth (I am older than you!) with a *fair* chance of success, but, if I win and get back to the House, I shall feel that it is not exactly the same place without you. I therefore just write this to say how sorry I am to lose you. Certainly you have always held up bravely and ably the banner of the Radicalism in which

I believe, and it remains to be seen whether we shall get it as well held up in the Parliament which is to be. Any way those who believe in Government 'of, for, and by the people,' ought to be grateful to you for your persistent preaching and teaching of that doctrine.

"The new Government promises well, but I remember a story on which you trenchantly commented in *Truth* some years ago. When Lord Dudley was married it was proposed in the Kidderminster Corporation that they should give him a wedding present, on which an old weaver rose and suggested that it should be postponed '*till we see how he goes on.*'

"Well, I hope that you will go on well and happily till the end of your days, and, meantime, not forget to give outside help to your old comrades, who for a bit longer are grinding in the Parliamentary mill."

Lord James of Hereford wrote:

"The announcement of your departure from the House of Commons seems almost to affect me personally. I recall a day in the end of August, 1868, when you and I and John Stamforth were sitting in front of the Kursaal at Homburg. You and I were discussing our relative chances in Middlesex and at Taunton, and then you asked Stamforth how he was getting on at Athlone. "I am member for Athlone," replied that unfortunate man, who afterwards, as you know, polled one vote.

"Well, the water has been flowing on since then. You and I have seen a good deal of political life, and taken a fair share in it. I hope we have not done much harm, but Heaven only knows. I am very sorry that you are not continuing in the fight. . . .

"I know how little I can do, for I am three years older than you are—but the House of Lords offers some opportunities for easy going to an old one."

"DEAR LABOUCHERE," wrote Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, —"We have enjoyed sweet converse together in the House of Commons and in the woods of Marienbad on 'men and

things.' We are both leaving the House of Commons at the same time, so I send you a word of greeting—or farewell, or by whatever other name it may be appropriate to describe these words. . . . A short Parliament generally follows a long Parliament, and I expect to see this canon once more illustrated."

"The *New York Herald* of this morning announces your appointment as a P. C.," wrote Sir Edmund Monson from Paris. "I am very glad that you have received this distinction, which, in my own case, I have always regarded as the most acceptable of all that have been bestowed on me. . . . I can quite understand your relinquishing Parliament, and I hope you may long enjoy the *otium cum dignitate* which no place better than Florence can supply. . . . Believe me, always your sincere old friend,

"EDMUND MONSON."

Lord Brampton wrote on the last day but one of the year: "I have just received your note. Your reasons for retirement from Parliament are unreasonable. But, as far as I am concerned, although I have not a word of objection to offer, still I remain *sorry*. With all my heart I rejoice in to-day's *Times*, and offer to you, my right honourable friend, my heartiest congratulations to you and all yours, and every good wish for the coming New Year. I wish I could avail myself of your invitation to Florence, but I fear I have no chance, as I am very weak still and can hardly hold a pen."

Only one other letter must be quoted from the friends of Labby's youth. Sir Henry Lucy wrote on Christmas Day:

"MY DEAR LABOUCHERE,—You will find in the forthcoming issue of *Punch* some reflections on 'The Sage of Queen Anne's Gate,' from the Diary of Toby, M. P. I believe they echo the feeling of the whole House of Commons, irrespective of party, at the prospect of your withdrawal from the scene.

"But why cut Westminster altogether? There is still the House of Lords. If I might behold you walking out shoulder to shoulder with the Archbishop of Canterbury to vote 'content' or 'not content' as the case might be, I should feel I had not lived in vain. . . . With a warmth and friendship dating back nearly thirty years—Eheu! we were colleagues on the *World* staff in 1875."

Toby, M. P., recalled in a pathetic little article in *Punch* the way Mr. Gedge had tried to do Labby out of his corner seat below the gangway, where Sir Charles Dilke had sat beside him on one side of the House or the other ever since Mr. Gladstone's Parliament of 1892. In order to secure a seat in the House, members had to be present at the reading of prayers, during which any one could slip a card with his name upon it into the back of the place he wanted. Now Labby was never at prayers, and yet, Mr. Gedge noticed, he had always had the same seat secured to himself in the orthodox manner. Accordingly, one day he allowed his thoughts to wander whilst the House of Commons devotions were proceeding, and his eyes followed his thoughts. Between his fingers held devoutly before his face, he peeped, and noticed Sir Charles Dilke, buried in prayer as usual. Then he saw his devotion relax for a moment. Sir Charles was slipping a card into the back of the seat which he intended to secure for himself, and Mr. Gedge was horrified to see that he proceeded to slip a card with Labby's name upon it into the back of the next one—the coveted corner seat below the gangway. Mr. Gedge subsequently drew the attention of the House to this piece of underhand dealing, but honourable gentlemen did not choose to take any notice of what would clearly not have been observed, if Mr. Gedge had been paying proper attention to his prayers.

A propos to the seating accommodation in the House of Commons, it should be remembered that as far back as 1893, when the disgraceful scrimmage for seats took place at the introduction of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill,

Mr. Labouchere had begun to agitate for a new House of Commons with seats for every member. He explained to a journalist at the time his plan for an ameliorated House:

"At present," he said, "a man goes before a constituency and, after a lot of trouble and expense, wins a seat—so it is called. He then comes up here to Westminster, and finds he has gone through only half the preliminaries necessary for securing a seat. He has taken only the first steps, which are simply child's play to what he has yet to do. Getting elected is simply nothing comparatively. First I wanted an octagonal chamber," he proceeded, "but I find general opinion *will* retain the present form. So my idea is to have eight rows of seats on each side of the House, curving round at the end opposite to the Speaker. If each row will seat forty-two members, you will find that will provide a seat for the whole six hundred and seventy-two. Then every one could retain his seat throughout the session. The difficulty about the square shape of the House is that it gives you an equal number of seats for each party and the Government is generally in a majority. That is why I would run the seats round at one end—so that the supporters of the Government could have the whole of one side, and as far as the second gangway on the other. Having a broader House would necessarily mean enlarging the Press and Strangers' Galleries also. All the members are in favour of it, with the exception of the front benches. They have got their seats assured, so they say that the House is cosy, and to enlarge it would force them to pitch their voices higher." The journalist who was interviewing him commented on the extreme moderation of his designs for an ameliorated House of Commons. "Oh," remarked Mr. Labouchere, "these are just the alterations we shall probably make. What I personally should have liked would be to clear the Lords out of their House, which is bigger than the House of Commons, and install ourselves therein."[1] Eight years

[1] *Penny Illustrated Paper, Feb.* 25, 1893.

later he went to Vienna, and poured forth in *Truth* the story of his envy when he saw the Austrian House of Deputies:

I went to see the Parliament House, and, after inspecting it, I felt that I could with pleasure join a mob to disinter the remains of the eminent architect who built the Palace at Westminster and hang his bones on a gibbet. The Vienna architect has erected a building which is Parliament Architecture. Everything is adapted to the wants and requirements of those who want to use it. The members of each of the two Chambers sit in a semi-circular room, and each member has an armchair and a desk before him. The general objection made to this plan of a deliberative room is that it obliges members to speak from a tribune. But at Vienna they speak from their places, and, owing to the excellent acoustic properties of the Chamber, they can be perfectly heard. I went over the place in the company of a priest who was visiting it at the same time. He perceived that I was an Englishman, and asked me how the place compared with the English Parliament House. "The members in England," I said, "sit in an oblong room, in which there are only places for half their number." "But what do the others do?" he asked. "They do not listen to the debates," I replied; "they seldom know what is under discussion. A bell rings and they come in, and are told to vote as their leader orders them." As a good Radical I felt it necessary to give a further explanation, so I continued: "The majority of the members are the supporters of the Government; it is one of the worst Governments with which a country was ever cursed; it is called the 'stupid party,' and it is composed of Junkers and men who have made much money. They want the laws to be made for their benefit, and not for the benefit of the poor." "But why," he said, "do they have a majority, for I suppose that the poor have votes as well as the rich, and there must be more poor than rich in England?" "They gained their election by corruption and falsehood," I answered. "Their wives and their daughters went about giving the electors feasts, and they went about saying everywhere that the Radicals wanted to destroy the Empire. In this way they

bought some with gifts, and others they deceived with falsehoods. Soon the electors discovered how they had been fooled, and for five years they have wanted to take away the Government from the 'stupids,' but, by our laws, a Parliament is elected for seven years, and the country is still obliged to submit to the disgrace of having such a Government for one or perhaps two more years. Then there will be another election, and the 'stupids' will be in a minority, and the Radicals who represent the sense and intelligence of the country will become the Government." "And the Radicals," he said, "will, I suppose, make a Chamber large enough to hold all the members." "I am not sure of that," I answered. This seemed to surprise him, but he thanked me for having made clear to him the party differences in England.[1]

But my story is wandering backwards instead of forwards. And so stories usually do in the City of Flowers, where the present is so full of ease and pleasure that a man's mind is free to linger where it will, either lazily in the middle ages, or to stray with graceful discrimination in the bye paths of memory to find the savour again of some of the deeds of a gallant past. He may choose, perhaps, to grasp contentedly and almost without effort, the gifts of the gods that lie about in profusion, but he must always remember that care and earnestness, strenuousness and ambition have no place in Florence. It was of course a home after Mr. Labouchere's own heart. He went to London in the January of 1906 to be sworn in as a Privy Councillor, and, in February, he came back with delight to his villa to enjoy the merry continental *train de vie* he had always loved.

Whilst in London, he wrote to Mr. Edward Thornton, who was then in India:

I did not, as you see, stand. At seventy-four one gets bored even with politics. I am only over here for a fortnight, as I have to get sworn into the Privy Council. The Unionists have been

[1] *Truth*, Sept. 21, 1900.

beaten badly, because they seem to have gone out of their way to court defeat. One never knows what may happen, but they will remain in a minority for the next twenty years, if they run on Protectionist lines. Joe swaggers and has captured the machine, and Balfour would do well to fight him instead of knocking under to him. The Chinese labour helped us greatly. They ought to have known that the old anti-slavery feeling is still strong, but they seem to imagine that every one has Rand shares. . . . The really important thing connected with the election is the rise of a Labour Party. I do not think, however, that there are above six M. P.'s returned who are *bona fide* and Socialists, they are all jealous of each other.

He wrote to Mr. Thornton again on March 10:

I had had enough of Parliament, for one gets bored with everything. . . . I have not the slightest notion what a Privy Councillor is, except that I had to take half a dozen oaths at a Council, which were mumbled out by some dignitary, and then Fletcher Moulton, who was also being sworn in, and I performed a sort of cake walk backwards. I don't precisely know whither we shall go in the summer—for it is such a relief to let the day take care of the day. It is lucky C. B. has so large a majority, otherwise things would have been difficult with the Labour lot—far more difficult than with the Irish.

Mr. Labouchere's most regular correspondent up till the time of his death in January, 1911, was Sir Charles Dilke. The friendship between them had continued uninterruptedly since 1880. Two letters that Mr. Labouchere wrote to Sir Charles Dilke in 1910 have an especial interest, bearing as they do upon the problem that had always interested Mr. Labouchere so keenly throughout the whole of his political career, and which, in the first twentieth century Liberal Parliament, had assumed a new aspect. The first of these letters was written on February 11:

My dear Dilke,—What is the Government going to do in regard to the Lords? I can understand a one-Chamber man, in

default of getting directly what he wants, trying to get it indirectly, by having a sham Upper Chamber. But if the Government has to appeal to the country on a suspensory veto, I doubt this creating much enthusiasm. If it be carried, this suspensory vote would, of course, be used by the Peers for all that it is worth when a Liberal Government is in to throw *batons dans leurs roues*. I should have thought, with the experience of the last Parliament, that it would be realised that Peer obstruction, cleverly managed, could reduce any Liberal Government to ridicule and contempt. So long as a Reform is hung up by the Lords, the electors have no heart in further Liberal legislation, which, in its turn, would also be hung up. A Party with a H. of C. majority at its back cannot afford to be unable to carry through its measures. Why not go at once for the abolition of the H. of Peers, and its being replaced by some sort of an elected Upper Chamber? Nothing is easier than to contrive one. The basis would be the constitution of the U. S. Senate *mutatis mutandis*. It should have only one half of the membership of the H. of C., and if the two Houses cannot agree, then they should sit and vote together on the issue. Notwithstanding the curious way in which Senators are elected in the Senate of the U. S., I never heard of any serious proposal to alter this. Its main strength is due to its executive powers, and this we need not provide for in our Senate. With any reasonable plan of election, and the members reduced to about 300, it is odds against there ever being a majority of one Party of above 40 or 50. No Government at present can get on long without a certain majority of slaves of more than this in the Commons, so the Commons would always get their way. I have been at times a President of and a member of several Abolition of Lords Associations, and have advocated abolition in thousands of speeches in the country. The feeling was generally against hereditary Legislators, for this comes home to all as an absurd abuse. If I were in the House I would move an amendment on the Address against hereditary Legislators, and the vast majority of the Government supporters would vote for it, as they would most of them be afraid of their electors. What surprises me is that the Unionists do not counter the plans of the Government by many such an amendment. They are sacrificing what is their interest to a lot of obscure Peers, who are of no

importance. As for the House of Lords, with only a suspensory veto, it is worthless to them, except for tactical obstruction in order to discredit a Liberal Government.

It is rather curious that if the H. of C. reflects the opinions of the country there is a majority for Tariff Reform, as all the National M. P.'s are Protectionists. As it is, they will find it difficult to vote for the Budget, with O'Brien painting Ireland red against it. He is a power in Ireland, and Redmond is perfectly aware of it. Anyhow the manœuvring in the H. of C. and the Debates will be amusing. There will be difficulties with the Labour men, headed by Keir Hardie. If I were the Unionists I would buy him.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

The second was written on November 17, and ran as follows:

My dear Dilke,— . . . It is a curious thing that in the discussions about Home Rule all round, no one has pointed out that in the German Empire Bavaria occupies a peculiar position. It has far more independent rights than any other State. It was only on these terms that it came into the Empire, for there is no great love lost between the Prussians and the Bavarians. Yet it sends its quota of representatives to the Reichsrath. Therefore there seems to me no particular reason why, if there be Home Rule all round, the position of Ireland should not be that of Bavaria.

I confess that I do not think much of the Government proposal in regard to the veto. It seems to me a stupid arrangement. The Upper Chamber is a fifth wheel on the coach which only can make itself a nuisance by persistent obstruction, which in two years is swept aside automatically. My experience in going to lots of anti-Lords Meetings led me to the conclusion that the country hates an Upper Chamber on hereditary lines, but does not quite believe in a Single Chamber which is absolute master. Why does no one propose to "scrap" the H. of L. and to have an elected Upper House, one-third of whose members are renewed by election every two years, or some such period? This would be on the lines of the U.S. Senate, only with a popular franchise,

instead of the strangely illogical one of the U. S. Such an Upper Chamber would probably be conservative in the real, and not the party sense of the word, and yet command respect. It would rarely act except when the decision of the H. of C. was influenced by a small minority, threatening to turn the Government out if it did not knock under to it. Were the Unionists to come forward with such a scheme, they might very probably get a majority.—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

After Sir Charles Dilke's death, Mr. Labouchere wrote the following interesting letter to Lord Channing, dated Feb. 18:

DEAR CHANNING,—No, I am not writing any memoirs. I shall find it more agreeable to read yours than to do so. . . . I knew him (Dilke) very well since his start in politics. When in the House, he was the only man well up, particularly in domestic legislature, and, really, it is thanks to him that many useful measures were passed. In explaining them, however, he was too apt to lose himself in minor details. In foreign politics he never clearly knew what he wanted, and he was given to believe in mares' nests which he thought he had picked up abroad. . . . He fancied that he would be able to become the leader of the Labour M. P.'s. They were ready to profit by his speeches, but it soon became clear that they would only have a Labour M. P. for their leader. We started a sort of Labour Party with a Whip. But they came to me and said that it must be understood that he was not to be either President or Chairman. In the main this was due to jealousy of him. . . . I did all that I could with Campbell Bannerman for him to be in the Cabinet. Campbell Bannerman hesitated. Then Morley made a speech asserting that the Liberals would not be satisfied unless he was included. At once the Bishop of Rochester and a head dissenter (I think it was Clifford) published letters protesting. Campbell Bannerman then pointed to these letters, and said that we should have a split in the party if he were in the Cabinet. Personally, I quite agree with you as to his ostracism from office, but you know what the English are, and particularly the dissenters. . . .

Why did you resign your seat? It was a perfectly safe one. I resigned because I had got to an age, when I got tired out at a long sitting. It is curious I was with Campbell Bannerman and his wife and mine. She wanted him to give it up, as his doctor had told him that he ought to. I urged him to go on. He said that this was odd advice, when I had said that I should do so, and he was younger than I was. I replied that it was worth taking risks to be Prime Minister, but not for anything else. And he is dead and I alive. . . .

If ever you want to rest calmly you must come down here and see me. I have a big villa close to Florence, and live a vegetable existence.—Yours truly,

H. Labouchere.

A great grief befell Mr. Labouchere in 1910. He and Mrs. Labouchere had been spending the summer as usual at Villa d'Este and Cadenabbia, and had returned to Florence in the early days of October. Never had Mrs. Labouchere appeared to be in better health and spirits. On the evening of the 30th October, she had delighted every one with her inimitable reading aloud of *David Copperfield*, and life at Villa Cristina, on that day, had seemed, if possible, more joyous and serene than usual. The next morning the blow fell, but so gently as to be almost imperceptible. Mrs. Labouchere, feeling a little giddy on rising, had returned to her bed to allow the temporary sickness to pass off. By the afternoon she was beginning to slip away into unconsciousness, and before the bells in the neighbouring convent had begun to welcome the dawn of the *Tutti Santi*, she had gone forth alone on her last long journey.

The winter of 1910 and 1911 passed quietly away for Mr. Labouchere. His days were cheered by the constant presence of his daughter, who had married Marchesa Carlo di Rudini, the son of the former Prime Minister of Italy, and Mr. Thomas Hart Davies stayed with him till Christmas Day, returning to Florence again in the early spring. A succession of visitors from England and Rome kept the house

gay and lively as he loved to have it, always provided that he had to take upon himself none of the activities or responsibility of entertaining. "I am merely a passenger on the ship," he would say, when he wanted to wriggle out of any active participation in the organisation of whatever might be going on. But it always happened to be towards the corner of the ship where that particular passenger was resting that the pleasure and interest of every one converged. It was not so much the charm of his talk, that was, perhaps, more entertaining in his old age than it had ever been, as the extraordinarily youthful and never failing interest that he continued to take in the affairs of every one else that made him the best conversationalist in the world. No little event of the smallest human interest was too trivial to amuse him, and to awake the never failing source of his mother wit. He passed the summer at Villa Cristina and went to Villa d'Este in September. Though his spirits were as gay and unflagging as ever throughout the winter, it was easy to see that his physical strength was beginning to weaken. The walk which he took daily round his garden fatigued him so much that, by Christmas, he had given up even that mild form of exercise.

He experienced another bereavement during the winter in the death of his oldest and most intimately associated friend, Sir George Lewis. He felt his loss very deeply, and I remember that when he told me the news his voice was full of emotion. He related that Sir George Lewis had always looked upon him as his *mascotte*. "As long as you're alive and flourishing, Labby," he used to say, "I shall be all right too, so mind you take care of yourself." "Just shows what nonsense all those things are," continued Mr. Labouchere, "for here am I as well and strong as ever, and there is poor Lewis dead and gone." The return of Mr. Hart Davies to the Villa early in December cheered him up immensely, and his devoted friend did not leave his side

again, until the last sad morning when he bade farewell to him on the hill of San Miniato.

It was fitting perhaps that almost the last letter that Mr. Labouchere should have written, should have been to one of his old theatrical friends. Mr. Charles James Sugden, the actor, wrote to him and asked him to write a preface to his (Sugden's) forthcoming volume of Reminiscences. Here is Mr. Labouchere's reply:

VILLA CRISTINA, Jan. 4, 1912.

MY DEAR SUGDEN—You ask me to write a preface to your forthcoming book. I don't think that I ever read one in my life, for they always seem to be platitudes, impertinently thrust forward by some person who has an exaggerated idea of his own importance, in order to hinder me from getting at what I really do want to read. Good wine needs no bush, and I shall be greatly disappointed if I do not derive great pleasure from reading yours, for you have been brought into close contact with so many persons of note in their day, and some of whom are still in this world, and can throw many sidelights on them, and know many anecdotes about them. Pray bring it out as soon as possible. I am now over eighty, and at about that age senile imbecility commences, so I do not want it to make progress before I have had the opportunity to read the book and can appreciate it.[1]—Yours truly,

H. LABOUCHERE.

But it was not until the beginning of the second week in January that we all felt certain that he would never be well again. He was sauntering along so gently and carelessly, as only Labby knew how to saunter, towards the brink of the dark river. When the little heaps of cigarettes, that were arranged about his library so as to be always ready to his hand, ceased to dwindle as usual, it became clear to each and all that he must be very ill indeed. As simply as a child, tired with play, he took to his bed on the 11th of January,

[1] *The Referee*, Jan. 21, 1912.

and did not get up again. He died peacefully at midnight on January 15, 1912.

The earliest remark of Mr. Labouchere's that I have recorded in this book was a jest, and so was the last I heard him utter. On the afternoon of the day before he died, as I was sitting at his bedside, the spirit lamp that kept the fumes of eucalyptus in constant movement about his room, through some awkwardness of mine, was overturned. Mr. Labouchere, who was dozing, opened his eyes at the sound of the little commotion caused by the accident, and perceived the flare-up. "Flames?" he murmured interrogatively, "not yet, I think." He laughed quizzically, and went off to sleep again.

. . . . . .

The words in which Mr. Hart Davies conveyed the news of his end to Carteret Street are so beautiful in their simple directness that no others can fitly replace them in this biography:

"His mind always remained perfectly clear. He took a lively interest in the German elections, the political crisis in France, and the events of the Italian-Turkish War. He was ever one for whom nothing that concerned the human race (*nihil humani*) was alien to his vivid intelligence. But his bodily powers were constantly declining, and on Monday, January 15, just before midnight, the end came, peacefully and painlessly, a fitting termination to the career of one who had ever been a fighter and ever in the forefront of the battle.

"He was buried on Wednesday morning, under the cold drizzling rain of the Florentine winter, at San Miniato, in the same grave with his wife, who died some fifteen months before him. There, his tomb, at the edge of the western battlement of San Miniato, looks over the Tower of Galileo and the dark cypresses of Arcetri. It may be said of him, as Heine said of himself, that on his grave should be placed 'not a wreath, but a sword, for he was a brave soldier in the war for the liberation of humanity.'"

Before his death, he had expressed a strong wish as to the place of his burial. He wanted to rest beside his wife at San Miniato. But, when the arrangements for the funeral were about to be made, it was remembered that only Catholics were permitted to lie in the beautiful cemetery of the Florentines. The difficulty seemed insuperable, and the preliminary steps had already been taken to bury him in the Protestant graveyard. His daughter, however, determined to leave no stone unturned so that she might carry out her father's dying wishes. An appeal was made to some municipal authority, and, by an extraordinary coincidence, that seemed to make Labby's funeral fit in with all the rest of his strange paradoxical career, it was ascertained that, just at that moment, the possession of the cemetery was passing out of the hands of the religious body to whom it had hitherto belonged, and was becoming the property of the lay ecclesiastical authority of the city, and there had been no time for new regulations or restrictions to be formulated. There were, therefore, from a legal point of view, none in existence, and so it turned out that Mr. Labouchere was permitted to lie in the spot that he had himself chosen.

For many days after his death, the letters of condolence and sympathy from all quarters of the globe continued to pour into the deserted home. Of these one must assuredly be published, for it bears witness to the loyalty and affection that was unfailingly manifested to him by the borough he had represented for twenty-five years in Parliament. It was addressed to Marchesa di Rudini, by Mr. Edwin Barnes, the Secretary of the Northampton Liberal and Radical Association, and ran as follows:

At a special meeting of the Executive Committee of the above Association, held last night, the following resolution was unanimously passed, which I was directed to send to you: "The Liberals and Radicals of Northampton have heard with the deepest regret of the death of the Right Hon. Henry Labouchere,

who, for more than a quarter of a century, faithfully represented the Borough in the House of Commons. The members of the Executive of the Northampton Liberal and Radical Association hereby place on record the profound gratitude of all its members for the loyal service which Mr. Labouchere rendered to the cause of Democracy during so many years. Whoever faltered, he stood firm, and it will always be a proud remembrance that Northampton also stood firm, and that there was no break in the mutual confidence of member and constituents. To his daughter, the Marchesa di Rudini, and other members of Mr. Labouchere's family, we offer our sincerest sympathy in the irreparable loss that they have sustained, and trust they may find some consolation in the warm tributes that have been paid by men of all parties to his life, character, and work." Having known Mr. Labouchere for many years, and being his agent in the important election of 1900 (during the Boer War), allow me to add my own personal sympathy and condolence with you.

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